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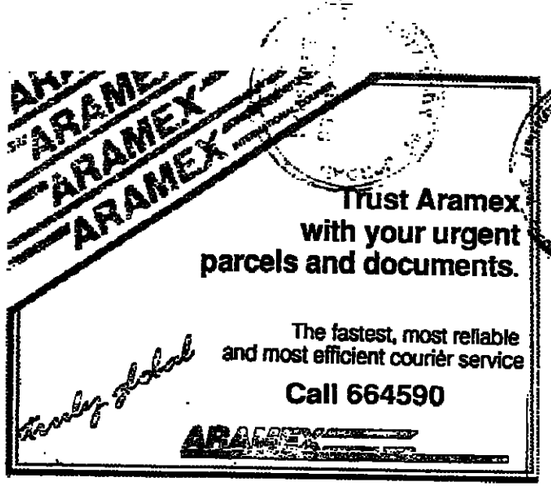
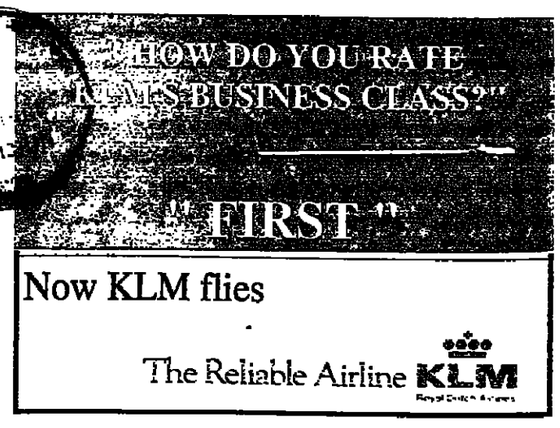
The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly





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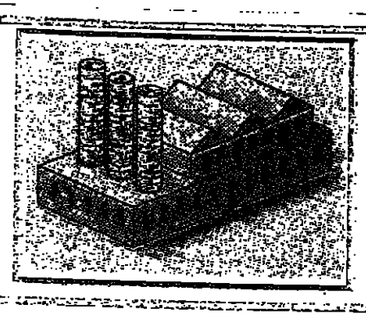

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Supplément en français du Star

41 votes in its favor

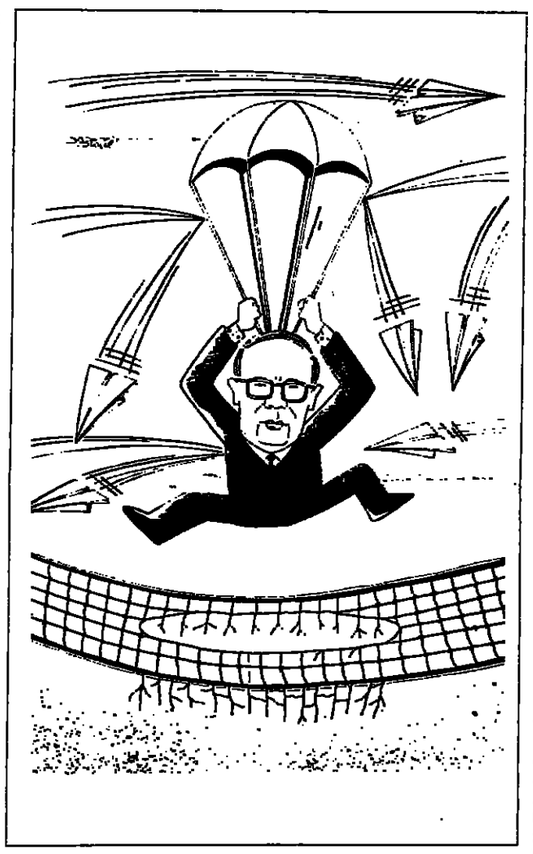
Uneasy victory for Majali's Government

AMMAN (Star)—After four difficult days, the Government of Dr Abdel Salam Majali was endorsed by the 12th Parliament winning 41 votes in its favor. Twenty-nine deputies voted against the Government and nine abstained. One deputy was absent.

The vote of confidence session, which began Sunday, ended Wednesday night after the last of 75 deputies spoke. Dr Majali delivered a two hour rebuttal in which he responded to allegations brought against him and his Government by many of the deputies (See stories below, People & Politics, Jordan Week and Our Say).

In a televised address aired live, Dr Majali said that the Lower House was not "domesticated" and that such allegations were aimed at harming both Parliament and Government. He said that he believed in the right of the Lower house to take stands and that his Government will work closely with the Lower House and will coordinate with it.

Dr Majali said that his Government believes in democracy and in continuing dialogue. He defended his Government's decision to adopt the King's Speech from the Throne as its policy statement saying that he had no choice under the Constitution. He said that there was nothing in the Constitution that defines a transitional government and that in its Royal Letter of Assignment, the holding of elections was but one of the objectives of this Government on the basis of equality. He added that holding the elections was one of the Government's objectives and not its only one.



Dr Majali said that the fact that his Government did not resign after the elections did not contradict with democratic norms so long as his Government had requested a vote of confidence.

Regarding the composition of his cabinet, Dr Majali said his Government was formed when the 11th Parliament was not in session which prevented him from consulting with deputies. But he added that he had met with heads of Parliamentary blocs recently to explain his Government's policy and not to consult with them about the reshuffle. Dr Majali added that his decision not to include deputies in his cabinet was in conformity with the principle of separation of powers and to give deputies absolute freedom in performing their duties.

Dr Majali defended his Government's amendment of the electoral law which he said was in harmony with the Constitution and the National Charter. He said his Government had taken every measure to ensure the integrity of the elections and that the amendment came after extensive national dialogue and in response to popular demands. But he added that temporary laws issued by the Government in the absence of the Lower House will have to be endorsed by Parliament and vowed to work with the Lower House to enact a new and advanced law.

Dr Majali said that the dissolution of Parliament came about in order to prevent any contradictions with the procedure of elections since the extraordinary session was to open in October, one month before the holding of the elections.

Dr Majali assured the Lower House that his Government considers Islam as the source of legislation in Jordan as stated by the Constitution.

Defending Jordan's position from the peace process, Dr Majali said Jordan was always ready to meet its national responsibilities especially in extending its hand of reconciliation. He said Jordan was among Arab countries that had accepted UN resolutions and that it had always sought a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He said Jordan's response to the call of peace was not in fact an act of surrender. He added that all Arab countries had accepted the Madrid formula and that the negotiating team which he headed did not compromise on national rights, but had in fact reached an understanding that guarantees Jordanian rights while stressing the principle of a comprehensive solution. He said that Jordan will not be in a weaker position if it managed to restore its rights and the rights of refugees and Palestinians on their land.

Dr Majali denied that the amendment of the electoral law was a prelude to passing a peace agreement with Israel.

Dr Majali also committed his Government to working towards decentralization, administrative reform and amendment of laws while preserving national unity. He also reviewed his Government's policies in various social, political and economic fields especially in the poorer areas of the Kingdom. ■

Arafat's visit leaves Jordan-PLO relations hanging in mid air

By Ahmad Shaker
Special to the Star

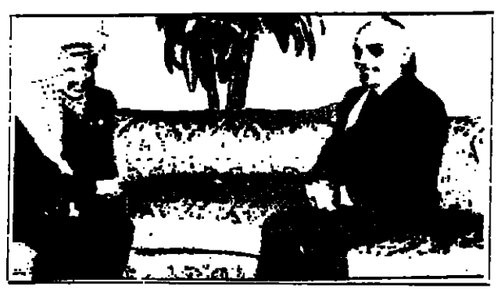
PLO CHAIRMAN Yasser Arafat's visit to Jordan this week has been a disappointment in more than one respect. While Mr Arafat was unable—during his two-hour meeting with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the US Embassy in Amman—to get the United States to pressure Israel into meeting the 13 December withdrawal deadline, he refused to sign an economic agreement with Jordan and did not revive the work of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committees.

It now appears that Mr Arafat, who met with His Majesty King Hussein once during his short visit, does not want to make any commitments with Jordan while waiting for political developments inside the Occupied Territories. A second planned meeting with the King never took place. It is now evident that Jordanian-PLO relations are under pressure with Mr Arafat backing away from promises to coordinate closely with Jordan in the coming phase.

Popular support for the PLO-Israel agreement of last September inside the Occupied Territories has receded with Mr Arafat's style of leadership coming under attack by prominent Palestinians.

Sources close to the Palestinian president have said that Mr Arafat is keen on keeping his options with Jordan "available" but prefers to work closely with Egypt, which played a major role in bringing the Palestinians and Israelis together in Washington on 13 September.

The same sources said that the Palestinian side made a number of observations on the draft joint economic Jordanian-Palestinian agreement and asked, for the third time, for more time to formulate its position. The Palestinians have also made it clear that all other agreements reached with Jordan regarding the organization of relations between the interim Palestinian authority and the Jordanian Government will have to be reconsidered. These including the operation of Jordanian banks in the territories, security cooperation and bridge regulations.



Mr Arafat has justified his request for more time by pointing to the pressures and criticisms that he is facing by leading Palestinian figures. The PLO chairman has hinted that all such agreements will have to be adopted by the PLO's Executive Committee and /or the Palestine Central Council and the Palestine National Council.

The sources told *The Star* that during his meeting with King Hussein, Mr Arafat has reiterated the critical importance of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho on 13 December. The PLO and Israel have disagreements over control of border points, including bridges, the size of the Jericho area and the number of Israeli troops that will remain to protect the settlements.

King Hussein reiterated to the Palestinian leader the importance of maintaining a high level of coordination between the two sides at this stage.

Meanwhile, Mr Christopher continues his shuttle diplomacy tactics which has focused this time on mediating between Syria and Israel. The US secretary of state will fly again to Damascus today, Thursday, amid news that progress has been achieved on the Syrian-Israeli track. Syria has rejected an Israeli offer to withdraw from the Golan Heights in stages. ■

Are we in a recession?

Peace talks breed moody markets

By Christopher Hume
Special to the Star

AFTER TWO years of growth, currency stability and a marked improvement of fiscal imbalances, the Government may have some legitimate grounds for frustration that activity in certain sectors of the economy has slowed over the autumn.

But Prime Minister Abdel Salem Al Majali's recent suggestion that the slowdown might be due to investor uncertainty following the 13 September peace accord has not been well received by the business community.

The prime minister argued that a "wait and see" attitude following the Israeli-PLO agreement could be responsible for the decline in the volume of trade at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), the reduced demand for real estate, and the slowdown in the number of companies being registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Banking figures agree with the general thrust of Mr Majali's comments.

"People are being too pessimistic," argues Hani Al Qadi, deputy director of the Arab Jordan Investment Bank. "From a fundamental point of view nothing has changed."

But critics charge that Mr Majali has misread the relevant indicators and say that the government's own failure to provide clearer guidance is contributing to the current uncertainty in the market.

In a sense, the government is in a no-win situation. Given that ministers are not in a position to dictate the economic terms of peace, they clearly cannot satisfy investors' demands for more concrete guidelines on the conditions which will prevail in 1994.

And Mr Majali's attempt to reassure the markets that the slowdown is self-induced have provoked the charge that the government is seeking to avoid its own responsibility for the management of the economy.

Nevertheless, the prime minister's reported comments were, at best, not illuminating.

The value of stocks traded at the Amman Financial Market's organized market, where the stocks of listed companies are traded, plunged in November following a smaller decline in October. The total value traded in November fell to JD 21.4 million, down from JD 47.1 million in October, and well down on the figure of JD 148 million recorded in the heady days of July. But brokers say the decline in trade has little to do with developments in the peace process.

The downturn actually began at the end of July when the Central Bank (CBJ), in line with IMF criteria, imposed ceilings on the bank credit. The result was to cut the flow of speculative investment on the stock exchange which in turn precipitated the panic selling at the end of July. The market remained depressed through to the end of November, though the general index of share prices has fallen only slightly since August.

In any case, brokers say the decline in trade at the organized market should be read in conjunction with the booming trade in new issues on the primary market. Almost JD 225 million of new stocks have been issued in the first 10 months of 1993 alone, compared to less than JD 50 million for the whole of 1992.

The primary market boom may not reflect the mood of the market as a whole, analysts acknowledge, but the migration of investment away from speculative purchases and into the potentially productive channels of the primary market is hardly a cause for Government concern.

Movement in the real estate market has been more ambiguous with mixed messages providing some support for the prime minister's comments. Most real estate agents report an unwillingness of prices to drop despite a marked downturn in the volume of trade.

General manager of Abu Judom Real Estate Mr David Abu Judom reports that clients are refusing to lower their prices to entice the reduced number of buyers. He says clients expect the market to start moving again once the current uncertainties regarding the peace accord are resolved.

Others claim the levelling-off in demand began before September as the increased demand associated with the return of 300,000 expatriates from the Gulf was gradually absorbed by the market.

Figures for construction activity fail to clarify the matter. The area under construction continued to rise through July and August although the number of construction permits may have reached a plateau by that time.

It seems clear, though, that even if the construction boom had been levelling out towards the end of summer, the mood since 13 September has further depressed the market.

Broader investment patterns confirm the trend in the real estate sector. Uncertainty has undoubtedly contributed to the reduction in the number of new companies being established, say investment bankers. But then, the rising number of new companies in the period up to summer was also a product of the repatriation of Jordanians from the Gulf.

Movement of retail sales is more difficult to assess, but Vice-President of the Jordan Trade Association Mr Fawaz Shalan says members of the association are reporting a 25-30 percent drop in trade since September. Mr Shalan's own business in paints and industrial coatings provides something of a benchmark for construction activity, and he reports a decline in trade well beyond expected seasonal fluctuations.

Director of the Jordan Clothing Company Mr Samir Maqdah reports the company's high street sales are down 25 percent since September. Travel agents say the number of Jordanians taking foreign holidays is well down on the start of the year and Mr Hani Suleiman, Jordanian representative of US Air, says business is down 40 percent.

But doubts since September may merely have accelerated an existing trend in retail sales. Reports of slack demand for such necessities as food and pharmaceuticals may say more about declining real wages than they do about the current status of peace negotiations.

And while an overall suppression of consumption is good for the Kingdom's external trade imbalance, it will not inspire confidence in either the commercial or manufacturing sectors. ■

Activity on Amman Financial Market

	Organized Market				Primary Market
			Share Price Index		
1993	No of shares traded (mil)	Value traded (JD mil)	General (1991= 100)	General Change	Value of shares issued (JD mil)
July	35.9	148.0	164.5	-2.3	19.9
Aug	12.7	49.4	152.4	-7.3	27.9
Sept	15.9	54.3	159.3	+4.5	20.0
Oct	12.3	47.1	157.7	-1.0	46.9
Nov	6.1	21.4	150.2	-4.7	28.3

Majali's four-day ordeal

House proves it is no paper tiger

By Ben Wedeman
Special to The Star

PARLIAMENTARY REGULATIONS stipulate that at least 41 votes are needed to bring down the Government, who, on the other hand, needs only obtain a majority of the votes cast.

The Prime Minister's first encounter with the 12th Parliament has not been a pleasant one. Throughout the week Dr Majali and his cabinet were compelled to sit quietly and listen as deputies vigorously pummeled the Government's policies, priorities and personalities, much to the delight of an appreciative audience. Among deputies both old and new, loyalist and opposition, feelings are still running strong that the Government overstepped constitutional bounds by dissolving the 11th Parliament and introducing the one-man one-vote electoral system.

Deputies who spoke with *The Star* agreed that the tone of the debate was far sharper and more critical than anyone had anticipated. "The Government did not expect that the deputies would behave in this way," Abdul Aziz Jaber, Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputy from the First District told *The Star*. Fellow IAF deputy Hamam Said agreed.

"There is no doubt that the opposition is stronger than what the Government expected." Before the vote took place Said predicted the Government would win, but its victory "will be rather painful."

"All their calculations were that this would be a passive Parliament," Irbid deputy Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh told *The Star*. "I think they were surprised by what they heard," he added.

He said the newly formed Government "will be one of the weakest cabinets ever." According to Rawabdeh, the current Government will not last more than five months, and will be replaced by a Government dominated by members of the Lower House.

Did the Government learn a lesson from this ordeal? According to the chrismatic Abdul Karim Doughmi, an independent leftist deputy from Mafraq: "Now the Government has an idea of what the representatives of the people are thinking...[The deputies] made constitutional demands, and insisted that the Government be bound by the constitution, and Parliamentary and democratic conventions." The 12th Parliament, Doughmi said in an interview with *The Star*, "has proven it is not weak and that it can effectively represent the will of the people."

While bolstered by the strong showing of opposition deputies, individual deputies saw little likelihood that the Government will accommodate their demands. Observed Hamam Said: "The Government will not change its behavior because from the beginning until now most of its actions have been undemocratic, whether that of the dissolution of Parliament, the passage of the one-man-one-vote election system, or the adoption of the Speech from the Throne as the government's statement." All of these actions, said Said, "show that the Government is unconvinced of [the importance of] Parliament's role and only wants to win this vote, no matter how small the margin."

The scene in the gallery was almost as interesting as what was going on below. When an unimportant deputy took the stand, it was an opportunity to go to the bathroom, light a cigarette (the numerous "no smoking" signs notwithstanding), read a newspaper or chat with a neighbor. When deputies renowned for their wit or strong opinions got up to speak, a murmur of expectation would run through the gallery as spectators hunched forward to catch every word.

In only a few instances did deputies receive applause. The sharp-tongued Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh entertained his colleagues and the spectators for more than a quarter of an hour by accusing the government of conducting "shock treatment which stuns but does not kill," and received hearty applause when he called on the Government to raise the wages of *all* state employees, not just ministers and senior parliamentary officials. Later the same day, spectators applauded Abdul Karim Doughmi for defending former deputy Laith Shbailat, prompting House Speaker Taher Al Masri to request that the public refrain from clapping. Moments later, Doughmi seconded Rawabdeh's call for a freeze on ministerial salaries until all state employees received raises. Once more the gallery broke into applause. The poker-faced Masri turned to the gallery as if about to give another reprimand, only to break out in a smile. The gallery responded with a hearty laugh, and Masri joined in. The ice was broken, the crisis passed.

The strength of the opposition should not, however, be calculated upon the heat of this week's sessions. According to observers, many of the deputies were maneuvering for better services in their constituencies in exchange for a vote of confidence. If the Government is able to respond to their demands, at least in part, it might succeed in ensuring its survival, at least in the short term. ■

Market Bounce

SHARE PRICES rose sharply during the first week of trading in December, bucking the downward trend of the previous two months.

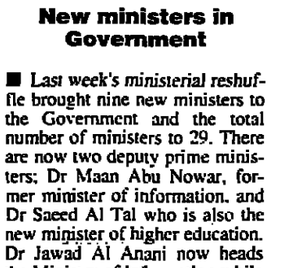
Brokers attributed the rise largely to book keeping measures but said the rally also represented an upward correction in the value of stocks which had been undervalued by the bear market of recent months.

They said the memorandum of understanding signed in Washington last week regarding the reopening of Jordanian commercial banks in the West Bank played a negligible role in the market rebound.

"We knew it was coming. It was only a matter of time," said Samir Jaradat, investment manager of the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank. ■

JORDAN WEEK

An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Dr Marwan Al Asmar



Estonian leader visits Jordan

■ *Their Majesties King Hussein* and Queen Noor were hosts to visiting Estonian President Mr Leenart Meri and his wife last week. The King and his guest discussed ways of enhancing future cooperation between Jordan and Estonia at various levels, especially economic and scientific. Speaking to Jordan Television, Mr Meri said: "We talked a lot about the possibilities of cooperation... with the technology we have developed in Estonia, we hope we can be of much use to the future Jordanian oil shale industry." Estonia, which gained independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, is one of the leading countries in the technology of oil-shale, which is believed to be one of the important sources of energy for the future. The Estonian leader appreciated King Hussein's stands and his wise and courageous policies in the light of recent developments in the region. He also valued Jordan's efforts in the peace process which are aimed at achieving a just and permanent peace in the region.

New ministers in Government

■ *Last week's ministerial reshuffle* brought nine new ministers to the Government and the total number of ministers to 29. There are now two deputy prime ministers; Dr Maan Abu Nowar, former minister of information, and Dr Saeed Al Tal who is also the new minister of higher education. Dr Jawad Al Anani now heads the Ministry of Information while keeping his minister of state for prime ministry affairs portfolio. Of the new ministers, three of them were former ministers: Dr Al Tal, Taher Hikmat and Hisham Al Khateeb, while five are first-time ministers. They include: Dr Fawaz Abu Al Ghanam (minister of state), Dr Abd Al Razzaq Nsoor (Public Works), Dr Amin Abdullah (Culture), Adeeb Halaseh (Transport), Adel Irshaid (minister of state). Dr Rima Khalaf took over the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Dr Khalaf, a US-educated economist is the third woman in the country, after Inaam Al Mufti and *Leila Sharaf*, to become a Cabinet minister.

Government has tough time in Parliament

■ *Lower House deputies* were tough on the Government during the four-day vote of confidence sessions last week. To the surprise of the Government, criticism came from unexpected corners of the House. Deputies who would normally be considered as pro-Government took a vehement stance. Mr Abdel Kareem Al Kabariti kicked off the first day of the confidence debate. In a blistering speech he criticized Dr Majali's Government for failing to respond to the legislature's overtures to start a cooperative relationship with the executive authority before last week's Cabinet reshuffle. Mr Kabariti said that the deputies wanted to work with the Government but the reshuffle, which excluded deputies of the Lower House, showed that Dr Majali "wanted separation" Mr Ali Abu Ragheb, a former minister, said that Dr Majali's ministerial team will not be able to effectively deal with the economic and social challenges facing the country. He said that "the Cabinet lacks the team spirit and its objectives are not clear." The ministers, he said are not capable of shouldering the responsibilities and hammering out solutions, a point echoed by deputy Mohammad Dawoudia, who attacked the appointment of Dr Rima Khalaf as minister of trade and industry. Deputy Abdel Razzak Tubeishat, a former minister and an independent Muslim, said that the Government greatly harmed national unity by taking a number of measures that spread fear among the public, especially in the case of amending the election law. As the debate continued, criticism increased as well. Former minister Mr Abdel Raouf Al Rawabdi of the now Al Yakatha Party was equally scathing. He spoke of seven "electric shock treatments" which the Government undertook: the dissolution of Parliament; the electoral amendment; the separation of powers; the cabinet reshuffle; the new official appointments; violation of constitutional norms; and the increase of salaries for ministers. He said that there should be an across the board salary increase for all Government and military employees.

Abu Ragheb

Kabariti

A new party formed

■ The latest casualty of the post-election period is the United Arab Democratic Party, Waad, for 635 of its members have left to form their own Progressive Umma [nation] Party. In a press conference, the now former general secretary of Waad, Dr Mohammad Al Owran and one of the leaders of the new party said that one of the main reason for the split is that Waad is linked to a number of unsavory organizations. Besides its links to the Freemasons, the party refused to disallow its members to hold membership in other organizations such as the Rotary and Lions clubs. The Waad leadership was accused of employing financial means to get what they wanted which is contrary to the principles of the new party. Waad was also accused of altering its pro Iraqi-stand and has come to support normalization with the Israelis, a view that contradicts previous party policy. The leaders of the new party stressed the concept of the Arab nation whose basic premise should be Islam both as a religion and as a culture. The party believes that democracy and political pluralism are the main tools for bringing national and Arab unity. Dr Owran said the party is a left of center and is applying for a license from the ministry of Interior.

Arab-Israeli dialogue leads to dismay

■ An Arab-Israeli dialogue will take place in Granada, Spain. Participating in the dialogue will include famous writers in the Arab world: Adonis, Al Taher Bin Jalon, Emil Habibi, Amin Malouf, Lutfi Al Khouli, and Mohammad Said Ahmed among others. This is the first dialogue of its kind and it is being condemned by a number of Arab organizations such as the General Union of Arab Writers (GUAP) whose present general secretary is *Mr Fakhri Kawar*, a former deputy. GUAP sees the meeting as a dangerous step on the road to normalization of relations with Israel, which at he same time continues to "kill our people in the occupied Palestinian territories." GUAP sees the dialogue as dangerous also because the participants are members of the creative and cultural elite in the Arab World and it was they who initiated steps for the dialogue. Furthermore, it was they more than any others that were expected to take a stance against normalization.

Writer's book refused publication

■ The author of a book on Freemasons in Jordan says he will no longer try to publish his book in this country due to the obstacles he already faced from the Press and Publication Dept., *Al Quds* reported recently. The book is a 950-page volume containing documents and secrets of the Freemasons in Jordan. The author, Mr Fuad Hussein, 35, who is also a journalist, has been collecting information since 1978 and says that he is presently studying proposals from Arab printing houses about the possibility of publishing the book. He says he will definitely publish his book, which involved 15 years of research. The book cites 850 Jordanian personalities—politicians and businessmen—who are directly involved with the Freemason movement, according to the writer. It also contains secret information which the writer obtained during his research. The book is basically about the history of the Freemasons and how they developed in Jordan as well as information about its Grand Lodges. The author shows that the Freemasons have a direct relation with Zionism, Judaism and are against Islam.

Gaza and the Intifada

■ For every Palestinian killed in Gaza since the start of the *Intifada* there were 352 children born according to a study made by the Palestinian organization for the Defense of Palestinian Rights. The organization, which completed its study last month, said that the number of Palestinians born since 1987 totalled 206,525. At the same time, the number of those killed in the Gaza Strip was 568.

This means that for every *Intifada* year there were 34,320 babies born as opposed to 975 people killed by the Israeli army. The study was made to mark the seventh anniversary of the *Intifada* sparked in 7 December 1987 in the Gaza Strip.

Conferences

■ Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Raed Bin Zeid, the third Jordanian-French Medical Conference will start today, Thursday, in Amman at the Royal Cultural Center. The conference, held under the theme "*Continuing* Medical Education", is organized by the Jordanian-French Medical Association. Participants in the two-day conference will include specialists in the field from Jordan and France of which five will be coming directly.

The Dean of the Medical Schools at both the University of Jordan and the University of Science and Technology will be giving a papers.

For the Record

By Ahmad Shukri

■ Minister of Finance, Sami Qamouh, will deliver the Government's budget address to the Lower House next week. The Government will present Parliament with the 1994 draft budget law which will be discussed by the Lower House before the end of this month. The House's *vote on the draft* law is equal to the House's vote of confidence in the Government.

■ Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali will fly to Tokyo today, Thursday, on a 10-day visit during which he will meet Emperor Akihito, Japanese prime minister and senior officials. Dr Majali is expected to sign an agreement under which Japan will provide Jordan with a new assistance package.

■ A number of senior Public Security officers will be retired soon, *The Star* has learned. They include officers who were recently promoted.

■ Palestinian sources have said the PLO is trying to requisition the old Jerusalem Radio frequency used by the Israelis since the fall of the Holy City in 1967, to be used by the Palestinian radio station. Negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel also include providing the proposed Palestine television with its own transmission frequency.

■ UNESCO has allocated $2 million for the support of cultural and media-related activities in Gaza and Jericho regions, *The Star* has learned.

■ Former trade and industry minister, Dr Bassam Saket, is the most likely candidate to take over the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) to replace Governor Dr Mohammad said Nabusli whose contract will expire in April.

Jordanian left sings a new tune

By Christopher Hume
Special to the Star

AS THE curtain rises on the Kingdom's 12th Parliament, parties on the left of Jordan's political stage are still debating which costume they should be wearing. Following a poor showing in the November elections, most are hastily re-writing their political scripts, penciling out references to "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and preparing to make a late entrance as a chorus of progressive democrats.

"Revolution is not on the agenda," admits Mr Issa Madanat, secretary general of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP).

The numerous parties of the left won a combined total of two seats in the new 80-member house—one for the DSP and one for the People's Democratic Party (Hashd). They claim the electoral law and obstruction by state agencies contributed to their failure, but they know the fundamental problem is a lack of popular belief in the socialist project itself.

The left also knows they should have entered the election as a united front, but unity has proved an elusive goal.

The Jordanian Communist Party and the DSP—who split following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc—are not even on speaking terms, and divisions on the correct strategy for the Palestinian national movement have kept the other leftist parties at loggerheads.

Hashd and the Jordan Democratic Popular Unity Party (DPUP) did offer a unified list of candidates in the November election.

But it was a last minute compromise decision and the results were not encouraging. Hasbd's Bassam Haddadin was the only candidate from either party who made it into Parliament.

It it also proving difficult to unite the left inside Parliament. The two deputies from the Hashd and DSP are participating in the 18-member Progressive Democratic Bloc. They are seeking to form a left caucus within the bloc. But the DSP are already suspicious that the Hashd's Mr Bassam Haddadin and Baathist Mr Khalil Haddadin have formed their own more exclusive cabal within the caucus.

Outside the house, the Hashd and DPUP leaderships say a union of their two parties is imminent. The negotiations could be delayed, though, now that Hashd is threatening to split again.

And, of course, the Gaza-Jericho accord continues to divide the left along pro- and anti- lines. The DSP, attempting to sit somewhere in the middle, reflect the political confusion.

"We are not against the accord," says the DSP's Mr Madanat, "but then we are not against those who are against the accord."

The general confusion has lowered the left's political ambitions. The talk today is of 'stages' and the need to pursue the correct strategy for the current 'democratic stage.' Socialism has become a very distant goal.

"We have no clear idea," admits Jamil Nimri, editor of Hashd's *Al Ahali* weekly, "of when and how to arrive at the second stage."

There is more to the left's reassertion of democratic fundamentalism than simply a desire to dump unpopular slogans. Those who have actually made it into Parliament will be demanding legislation to permit agricultural workers and teachers to organize in unions; a legal framework to enable students and women's groups to form their own societies; and a more liberal reform of the recent press law.

However, the left will need more than a commitment to democracy if it is to remain a coherent force.

The present divisions within leftist ranks may be electorally crippling, but unity alone will not provide the solution.

The left agreed to present a unified slate for elections to the Union of Engineers on 5 December—and were emphatically defeated for their pains. (See box below.)■

China Town celebrates 1st anniversary

The new management of the China Town restaurant at the Forte Grand Hotel celebrated its first anniversary. The manager of China Town, Mr Liping, spoke of the excellent new changes that have occurred, the good food and the new reduced prices. He said that China Town was owned by one of the biggest international Chinese companies. The restaurant despite the fact that it is located in the Forte Grand is completely independent in its management.■

Islamists sweep union elections

By Christopher Hume
Special to the Star

ISLAMIST CANDIDATES gained an emphatic victory over secular opponents in elections to the Jordan Engineers Association on 5 December. The Islamists won 12 of the 25 seats being contested, while the left-wing bloc took only 3 seats. An independent took the remaining seat.

The victory was a blow to the left who had, on this occasion, managed to overcome their political differences and contest the elections as a coalition of left and democratic forces. The results underscore the growing influence of Islamist ideas among the professional departments of Jordan's universities.

The Islamists worked tirelessly to get their supporters to the polls despite a turnout that independent observers say was disappointing. The Islamists have also won respect for their efficiency in the delivery of union services to members.

The Islamists have made substantial gains in elections to professional associations throughout the region. In Egypt, where syndicate elections have offered an opportunity for a relatively free expression of political preferences, Islamists have ousted secular leaders in nearly all the major professional syndicates, including the prestigious lawyers syndicate.■

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Embassy Suites opens a new property in Canada

EMBASSY SUITES has opened its second property in Canada — a 128-suite hotel in St Catharines, Ontario, bringing the total system size to 107 hotels and 26,129 suites. Canadians have been familiar with the Embassy Suites product since the 1992 opening of their hotel in Markham, Toronto.

The four-story hotel is located on 5.7 acres of the Brock Business and Industrial Park. The site is actually in the city of Thorold, just south of St Catharine's city limits. The hotel is nine miles from Niagara Falls, 33 miles from Buffalo, New York, and 69 miles from Toronto.

Converted from a Parkway Suites Hotel to the Embassy Suites flag, the hotel features separate parlor and bedroom areas, a sofa bed, two remote-controlled televisions and fully-equipped kitchenettes in each suite. There are 91 standard suites, six executive king-bed suites, 18 queen-bed suites, and 13 two-bedroom family suites. The executive and family suites have a jacuzzi bath and upgraded furnishings.

Dining facilities include a 66-seat Mediterranean/Italian cuisine restaurant, in Piazza Pasta and Wine Bar. There is a total of 10,780 square feet of meeting space, including a newly-constructed theater-style room which can accommodate 300 people. Fitness facilities include a fully-equipped workout room with sauna and whirlpool, and an indoor pool.

Visitors to St. Catharines will enjoy the lush farmlands, fruit trees and vineyards of Canada's Wine Region. Guests can also visit St. Catharine's historic homes and buildings; see Canada's largest shipping canal, the Welland Canal; or see one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Niagara Falls.■

هيكل الأمل

People & Politics

Majali's days of ordeal

■ For four gruelling days, Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali and members of his cabinet sat down silently to listen to over 75 speeches made by Lower House deputies in what has become prime ministers' worst nightmare; the vote of confidence sessions. The surprise was that this Government, which expected a fairly easy passage through the labyrinths of the Lower House, was scrutinized, squeezed, criticized, bombarded with accusations and labeled like no other government since democracy made a comeback to Jordan in the late 1980s. A slightly battered premier had to endure accusations from the right, left and center. By mid-week the executive branch was definitely in trouble and sounded the alarm. Senior officials like Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker and others intervened on behalf of the beleaguered Prime Minister to make sure that what started as a trickle in the first day of speech making, Sunday, would not turn into a flood.

By the third day the deputies' strategy became apparent. Far from being the domesticated and docile chamber as was labelled by the press, the House wanted to prove a number of points. One, to get even with Dr Majali who reshuffled his cabinet last week without consulting with the deputies or including any in his cabinet, and two, to show solidarity with the 11th Parliament, which was dismissed arbitrarily by Dr Majali's Government, and three, to castigate Dr Majali and his Government for not running a clean election and for endangering the fragile democratic process, and four, for making the electoral law a freak by any legal standard, and five, for not following political norms by resigning once the elections were over, and six, for hiding behind the King's Speech from the Throne instead of making his own Government statement....

Dr Majali appeared calm throughout the long days. But time must have passed slowly for him. There were a number of speeches that must have really hurt him; from Abdel Karim Kabariti (Ma'an) who served in a number of previous cabinets under two prime ministers, from the House's iron lady, Toujan Faisal (Third District), from former Royal Court press secretary Mohammad Dawodieh (Tafileh) who labelled Dr Majali's Government as both 'Ahdist, referring to deputy Abdel Hadi Majali's (Karak) (Dr Majali's brother) Al 'Ahd party, and Wafdist from *wafd* or delegation in reference to Dr Majali's days as head of the peace delegation. Attack came from unexpected sources like former ministers Abdel Razzaq Tbeishat (Irbid) and Ali Abu Ragheb (Third District). They talked about threats to national unity, discrimination in key appointments and obvious bias in favor of one party. But there were those who took a moderate course, praising the Government and calling upon it to end unemployment, alleviate poverty, open roads and schools and hospitals....etc. Fierce attack also came from former minister Abdel Ra'ouf Rawabdeh (Irbid) who accused the Government of resorting to electric shocks in order to "terrorize" the deputies—from dissolving the 12th Parliament to barring deputies from becoming ministers.

IAF deputies were in harmony with themselves saying that they could not vote for a Government that does not rule in accordance with the word of God and that tampered with the democratic process by dissolving Parliament and interfering with the elections and their results, not to mention its sitting with the Israeli enemy to divide Jerusalem!

Dr Majali's ordeal was to end on Wednesday but not until the Lower House proved that it was no paper tiger. While Dr Majali knew that his Government will not be voted out of office (41 deputies must withhold confidence for that to happen), it became apparent that he would barely receive 40 votes in his favor—a critical figure that would leave Dr Majali standing but weakened. No fewer than 30 deputies are expected to vote against. Those who would abstain, to escape external pressures, would make the difference.

Dr Majali may have committed many mistakes during his short but eventful term in office. The worst, he now knows, was to underestimate the 12th Parliament. He did so by leaving the deputies out of his cabinet, but also by appointing a weak team to his Government on the basis of patronage rather than merit. That left his Government extremely vulnerable.

If Dr Majali decides to stay on even after receiving a lukewarm endorsement from the Lower House (the two previous governments received over 41 votes in favor), he would not have much time to recoup from his ordeal. In few weeks the Lower House will go through the same ritual when its members take the stand again to vote on the Government's budget law.

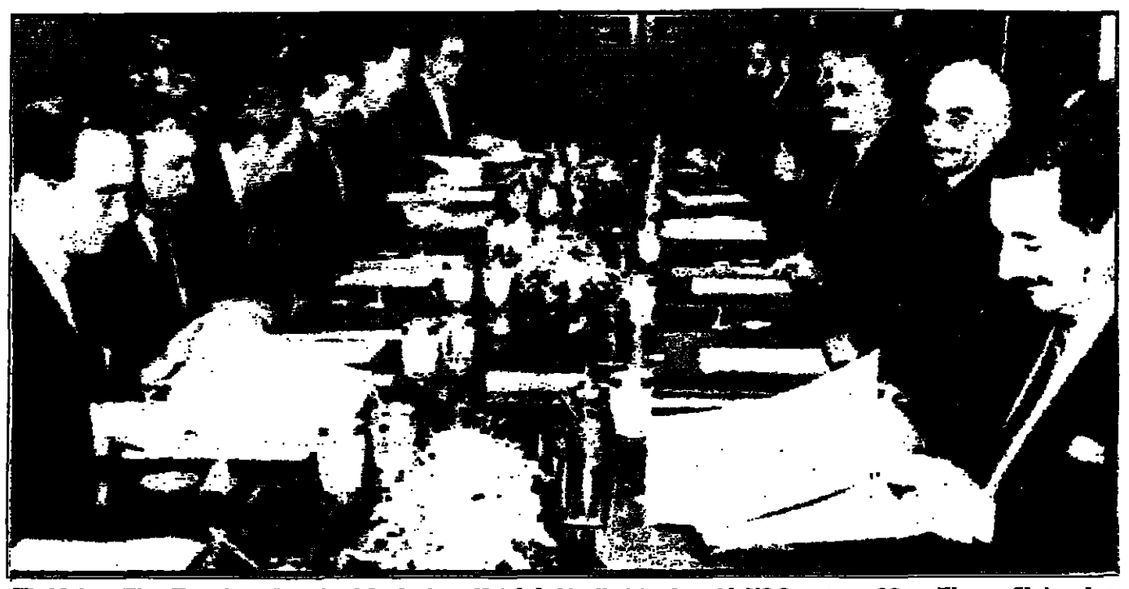
Media comes under fire

■ The Government-run media, namely radio and television, were caught by surprise, along with Dr Majali, because of the strong attack on the Government. As a result only little of what was said under the dome was aired. Some deputies, especially those who launched extremely critical attacks, had only selected paragraphs of their speeches aired—the least critical. But even some daily newspapers failed, in the first day, to publish all the speeches, but corrected themselves the following days. The new Minister of Information, Dr Jawad Anani, was blamed by some deputies for this. He was even accused by deputy Bassam Emoush (Zerqa) for being the minister for normalization (with Israel) since he was a member of the Jordan peace delegation. Former minister of information, Dr Ma'an Abu Nowar, who is now deputy Prime Minister, also came under fire for failing to control the publication and airing of material contradictory to Islamic values. Deputy Aref Bataineh (Irbid) accused the ministry of performing the role of the censor. Third District Amman deputy Toujan Faisal also criticized Dr Majali's policy on the role of the media in politics saying that she disagrees with him, that the media should not be ahead of or lead politics. She added that such a policy has been used to override the rights of journalists and their freedom.

Christopher fails Arafat

■ Away from the overheating local politics to the coolness of regional politics where US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the area failed to break the deadlock on the PLO-Israel front less than a week before Israel is supposed to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area under the 13 September agreement. Mr Christopher's two-hour meeting with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at the US embassy in Amman, Monday, did not work out to Mr Arafat's favor. The United States, towing the Israeli line, refused to pressure Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, to stick to the agreement's withdrawal date of 13 December. That left Mr Arafat in a tricky position. He had warned against ignoring the deadline, but it seems that the Palestinians will get nothing more than an elaborate redeployment of Israeli troops with the media fanfare that will accompany it. So if Mr Christopher was not here to help Mr Arafat save his deal with Israel, why was he here? Syria remains the Gordian Knot in the current Middle East peace process, at least in America's view. Mr Christopher had focused his efforts on salvaging the Syrian-Israeli talks, bogged down since the last round of Washington talks was concluded two months ago.

Mr Arafat, who is facing mounting criticism over the way he is handling his negotiations with Israel, will be in serious trouble if Israeli troops continue to patrol the streets of Gaza City on the morning of 13 December.



His Majesty King Hussein and top-level Jordanian officials held talks Monday with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The King later said that "considerable grounds" had been covered in the quest for peace, but much work remained to be done. He said, "I believe in the need to continue positive movements towards peace as much as we can," and added that "our view has been and will be, that peace should come as a crowning achievement after resolving all these problems." Mr Christopher echoed that all parties involved in the Middle East peace process could reap the benefits of a comprehensive peace settlement.

Fawzi Tuaimeh of the National Action Front

'Our main priority is to strengthen the democratic process...'

Editor's Note: Dr Fawzi Tuaimeh, is spokesman for the National Action Front (NAF) and deputy from Balqa. Dr Tuaimeh received his PhD in psychology, after which he taught at the University of Jordan from 1976 until 1984. He became a member of Parliament at that time and again in 1989. He recently spoke to *The Star*'s Raed Al Abed about the NAF.

Dr Fawzi Tuaimeh

What is the National Action Front?

It is a group of deputies, from different political backgrounds who have come together to form the NAF. They have Parliamentarian aims in addition to political, social and economic ones; the first priority is how to work as a group inside Parliament in an efficient and fruitful way that will best serve the people and the country. We have learned from the past that political action needs a unified method, getting people around ideas and action; the single Parliamentarian by himself or herself can't really effect change....Therefore Parliament members need some kind of collective effort in order to have an impact on what goes on inside Parliament, whether legislative or otherwise.

Does your front represent any parties?

No, the whole front is an independent group, it is a collection of independent deputies...

..... but some like Al Ahd party belong to your front?

Some members belong to political parties, but parties as such have nothing to do with the NAF, which is a completely independent parliamentary group, that concerns itself with Parliamentarian activities...There are people who say that the NAF is linked with specific parties like Al Ahd, but this is not right.

How will the NAF interact with other blocs?

The NAF is open to all Parliamentarian blocs; we have good ties with other blocs. With some exceptions, there are no real differences among the different blocs. Most of these have moderate political philosophies, they don't really have unique political ideologies. There are four Parliamentary blocs that belong to the same framework, the same political, economic and social background.... However, I look to Parliament as a whole, one that was founded to make changes so the people and the country can realize the great potential of this Parliament to make a solid contribution to the modernization of the nation, and to make it a more just and free society based on respect for the law. We have to follow basic principles that make the political transition possible, from individual values to the development of institutions.... People are placing great hopes on this Parliament to resume the process started in 1989, to strengthen the democratic condition in a more general sense...democracy is not represented by Parliament only.

So what are your main priorities?

Our main priorities are to strengthen the democratic process—to give it the right definition, and to deepen the sense of democracy in the Jordanian political climate. I see the NAF as a group that aims to make democratic values rooted in many aspects of life.... For what is the value of Parliament or political parties in Jordan if such values as justice and equality are not going to be rooted within our value-system?..... That is why we see that collective effort is highly needed.....We can't effect change in the Government if we don't speak with unity and we can't actualize our constitutional role.... no matter how fantastic our individual abilities are. We will not really have an impact on Government and on the whole political process if we don't put our strengths together, for the sake of democracy, for the sake of economic change, for the sake of correcting our administrative bureaucracy, and our corrupt way of administering our resources. All these aspects demand a united Parliament from us. The future is not so clear—the peace process, the future of the country under the New World Order, the future of the region even is not so clear under the New World Order.

What is your view of the peace process?

I do support the peace process, within the UN conception, peace based on the Security Council resolutions, the peace that brings honor, that brings comprehensive peace, that restores the national rights of the Palestinian people—we are for this peace.

How do you see the Gaza-Jericho accord—bearing in mind that it does not satisfy the UN resolutions?

So far, it doesn't satisfy the ambitions of Arabs, but we don't know what is behind it. It is a transitional period, and if it is a step towards restoring comprehensive peace and restoring the rights of the Palestinian people we are with it. Jordan has always been for peace that brings justice to all concerned people in the region, and I think Jordan will not participate in any peace that doesn't resolve the basic national and central issue of the Palestinian people....the resolution of the Palestinian problem is at the heart of the matter, and will stay so to all Arabs. A comprehensive peace with Jordan, Syria and Lebanon can only be possible if the Palestinian issue is resolved.

Do you think the Gaza-Jericho accord will be at the expense of Jordan?

Not necessarily; we are in support of the Palestinian independent decision. If Palestinian national objectives are fulfilled, our objectives are also fulfilled in the process; Jordan has its own sovereignty, its own right for fulfilling its economic, political and social well-being. Parliament is committed to maintain such sovereignty and to strengthen conditions within Jordanian society, and I don't believe the accord is necessarily at the expense of Jordan's national objectives.

The peace agreement between Jordan and Israel will be one of the major issues on the Parliamentary agenda. How do you feel about that?

I don't think Parliament can make a decision on anything that is not totally clear regarding our national security... For that, each step has to be studied carefully, according to our national priorities. Parliament will act accordingly, and it will not be studied separately from the conditions of comprehensive peace. Jordan can't be isolated from the total picture.

What is your position on the Government statement?

We don't see any problem with the Speech from the Throne as the Government statement, and we fully supported the Government statement.

How do you feel about the committees for contesting the elections?

Everybody has the right to contest the elections ..... There are two kinds of contestations, one aiming at the formal procedures taken during the elections, while the other concerns contestations relating to candidates. We can't pass any judgment before we study the issues. It is normal practice for every new Parliament.

How do you evaluate the past elections?

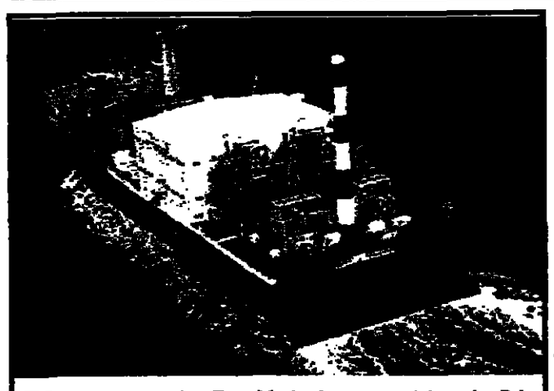
I believe they were fair and the people of Jordan considered the elections very seriously. I believe these elections were necessary for the continuation of the democratization of the country, and to fulfill very important objectives for the internal stability and progress of Jordan.

How do you evaluate the role of political parties in Parliament?

The political parties' representation in Parliament aside from the Islamic bloc is very little. It will have no impact, and I don't see any serious impact in the future. Such parties need a longer period of time to establish themselves to run in future elections according to political programs. Before that, I doubt if such parties will have any real influence. The few representatives of these parties came to Parliament by tribal influence, not political. So it is not an issue to study now because the present political parties do not have much weight in the political process. The study should focus on why and how to accelerate the growth of such parties.

What about the discussion of *Shura* and democracy?

I don't think we really need to have such philosophical discussions. I would say these are subjects that are best left to scientific, historical, sociological and political seminars. But in Parliament when we speak of *Shura* it is a part of our cultural heritage, a concept that belongs to Arab Islamic history. The meaning of *Shura* should be specified, not by Parliamentarians but by people of philosophy, and history..... politicians use terms that serve their own ideas or viewpoints. That is why these discussions are fruitless. His Majesty said "Call it whatever you want to call it." If we agree on the meaning, the matter is solved..... We should objectively discuss such terms. ■



■ Japanese corporation, Toyo Menka, has proposed through a Palestinian businessman (The Star 2 December) to sell a ready 60 megawatt power station to Gaza for $140 million. The station to be floated from Japan to Gaza is to be attached to a barge on the shores of Gaza. According to Mr Hafiz Farouki, who is proposing the project, the deal is to be financed by a 40-year soft loan from the Japanese. The diesel powered station will provide enough electricity to meet the overall needs of Gaza and the West Bank, according to Mr Farouki. No decision has been taken yet by the PLO on the project.

Business Chronicle

Edited by Bilal Hijjawi

Let there be clarity of vision!

■ Last October, when speaking to an Arab business conference in Amman, Dr Nabil Shaath, top political adviser to Mr Yassir Arafat and chief PLO negotiator with Israel, called for a strong attendance of elite Jordanian and Palestinian businessmen following the implementation of the PLO-Israel agreement. "Strategic blocks were racing to extend aid to us to open up opportunities in the future business that will be developing in the area." He asked his business audience to begin laying down bases for their future operations in Palestine. "Don't wait until the cost of doing business there is double the current prices. Just yesterday, a dunum of land (1000 square meters) was sold for JD 400,000 (about $.6 million) in Gaza." Dr Shaath added What is happening?

Businessmen started scouring the area for business opportunities ever since the 13 September breakthrough agreement. The Israeli press reported a couple of months ago that a group of top Jordanian bankers went to the Occupied Territories on a business tour. Others have bought land and await the general peace dividend to unfold. But a person monitoring the situation may feel the dissemination of information is becoming ever more selective. Secrecy shrouds developments on all fronts of the negotiations. Committees, joint committees and subcommittees are all one hears about nowadays. But no information is released about the method or mechanism on how should an investor do business. Why?—and for how long will this last? Such blocking of information is making a very negative impression on Palestinian investors-to-be. Investors need information to begin development or even to begin thinking about such projects. Some have even charged that those connected with the PLO in some way or another may get the lion's share in future opportunities in Palestine. A tight grip on lucrative market opportunities by the PLO may leave those investors out in the cold—the sort of "we'd leave them the crumbs to munch on while we get to keep the cake." Mr Jawid Ghossain is a candidate and head of a possible joint venture between Israel and Morocco. Another possible development of the Gaza Port makes a big scoop for the media as a mega project, but no information has so far been released to the public on what, who, when or even why such a development is taking place.

Developing a financial infrastructure in the Occupied Territories

■ Dr Mohammad Saced Nabulsi, governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, officially announced the Jordanian dinar as the legal tender in the upcoming transition period, but the PLO immediately denied it! Jordanian bankers complain that no legal umbrella is present in the territories. Many banks were given the green light to embark on developing the financial infrastructure for their new or frozen offices in the territories and many of them did just that. But they have remained confused about the kind of representative authority to deal with up until now. Jordanian and Israeli central banking authorities have been very slow to respond to enquiries or to offer even the least bit of advice. These are sensitive times, yet the authorities are projecting a deeply confused image of themselves and this has complicated the situation much further. Bankers also charge that political developments may take years before a working and easy-flowing legal framework is in place for their operations. For bankers it is impossible to operate without obvious and precise regulations. How can business develop without a banking infrastructure? How can business be enacted without a legal cover? Such confusion may look natural if one considers the difficulties faced by the negotiators on all sides. But will this become the norm?!

Austrian delegation visits Amman

■ Scouting possible cooperation fields with Jordan, Mr Fritz Langer, Director of the Middle East Desk in the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and heading the commission told *The Star* that Jordan and the region show promising signs for future bustling markets under peace. "This area should see economic expansion; hopefully bilateral trade between the two countries will see serious developments in the years that follow," said Mr Langer. Austrian exports to Jordan include machine tools and high priced fabrics among many other exports. The informal reception held at the home of Dr Michael Angerer, Austrian commercial attache, attracted a good number of Jordanian businessmen. According to Mr Langer, the trade deficit with Austria is because the Kingdom has only recently joined the league of exporting nations and eventually export markets in Europe may become an easier target for industries. Jordan's main exports to Austria are phosphate and potash. After the their visit to Jordan, the delegation left for Syria.

$50 million for feasibility studies in Palestine!

■ According to a source at the Economics Department of the PLO, any investor can invest in the Occupied Territories under current laws. However, if the project involves a joint Palestinian-foreign investment, PLO approval should be sought. News on an Israeli-Morrocan joint venture headed by Mr Jawid Ghossain was rebuffed by the PLO as fabricated by the press. The department said that until now no such joint ventures have taken place in reality. "Any investor is allowed to invest in the territories, as long as the investments are not in strategic infrastructural developments (roads, power, telecommunications). " The department source said that no serious or major feasibility studies have been finalized on possible developments in the Palestinian infrastructure until now. "All we have are studies collected from local municipalities in the territories; the World Bank is still collecting them and constructing the larger picture of the situation." He said the World Bank has recently extended Palestinians a 40-year soft loan of $50 million for executing feasibility studies. The source said that whenever the $2.5 billion donations are released for development, a tender will be awarded to who ever qualifies for them and no closed project assignment would be given to anyone. "Unless we are talking about independent donations other than those from the donors countries."

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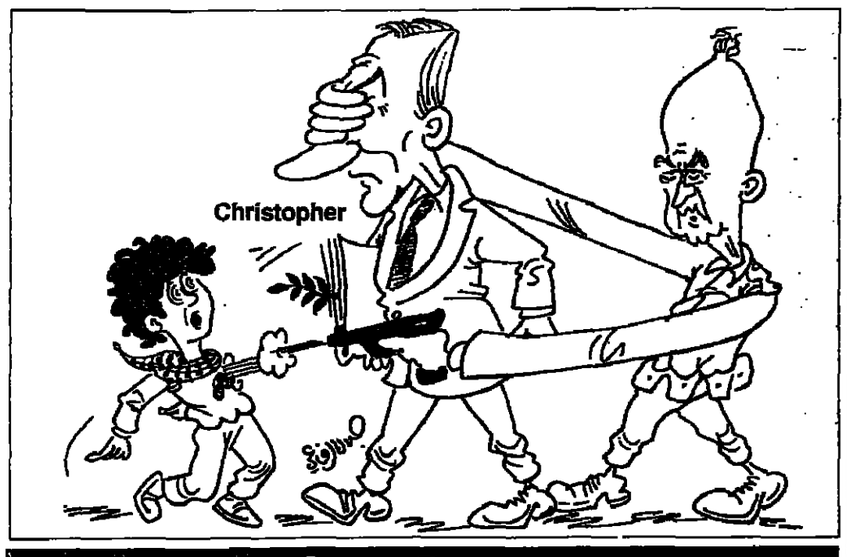


Our Say....

The first test of endurance

THE VOTE of confidence session that spanned four days this week has captured the nation's senses because it was the first test of endurance for both the Government and the newly-elected Lower House of Parliament.

While the Lower House was able to dispel allegations that it will be a tool in the hands of the Government, Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali has managed to win the confidence of the House not because the deputies were "domesticated" but because he earned it.

That lengthy exercise, slow and painstaking as it is, is necessary for the advancement of the democratic process in Jordan. That process, which underwent important challenges during this past summer, appears to have survived. The people can rest assured that the 12th Parliament will be a loyal representative, checking on the Government and making sure that legal, legislative and administrative reforms are kept alive.

Still, Dr Majali came under heavy attack by a number of deputies. His Government was responsible for dismissing the previous Parliament and for amending the electoral law in a way that adversely affected national unity. His response to these attacks was to defend his Government's actions, but what matters for all Jordanians is the fact that this Government will be made accountable for its actions—this is the essence of parliamentary democracy.

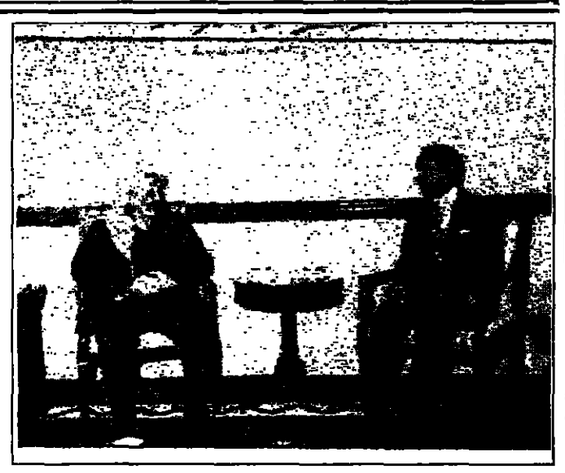
Now that the confidence test is behind us, our hope is that both the executive and the legislative branches of Government will now work together to enable the country to pass through the difficult challenges that lie ahead. The peace process and the new realities that it will create, the economic conditions, Jordanian-Palestinian relations and the completion of the economic readjustment program are but a few of the challenges that Jordan will be facing in 1994. These require the vigilance of our deputies and the tireless dedication of the Government.

There is no doubt that the Middle East peace will continue to be the main issue in this region during the coming phase. Deputies should not reject the process, or endorse it, before understanding the gains that Jordan stands to make out of it. It is unfair to brand Dr Majali's Government simply because it is involved in negotiations. The issue of Jordan's involvement in the Middle East peace negotiations is a national one that has nothing to do with governments but with national interest. Determining that interest lies with Parliament and that is why it should not be taken lightly.

Most of all, the Government will have to focus its attention on honoring its commitments—those made by Dr Majali in his rebuttal Wednesday evening. It is our belief that if Dr Majali is successful in fulfilling half of his promises, Jordan and Jordanians will be better off.

Jordanians should feel proud that democracy is still alive and healthy. So far our democratic experiment has survived the turmoils brought upon the region. It has been our asset and the guardian of people's rights as citizens. Dr Majali should add to the rich democratic heritage that we have accumulated during the past five years. This is for him to understand and carry out, and for Parliament to be sure that he does. ■

Christopher rejects Arafat plea in Amman meeting



US Secretary of State Warren Christopher met in Amman Monday with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and gently rejected his plea for the United States to press Israel to keep its commitment to begin withdrawing from Gaza and Jericho on 13 December, as called for in the Israeli-PLO accord signed 13 September.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said there is "a tacit understanding" with the Palestinians that an agreement on the pullout does not have to be signed in the next week, and he pledged that the timetable for completing the withdrawal by April 13 will be met.

These differing views appear to suggest that both Israel and the PLO are preparing for a week of intensive jockeying before this coming Monday, 13 December.

US officials said that in a two-hour meeting at the American Embassy in Amman, Arafat told Christopher that he is under heavy pressure from Palestinian militants and the PLO Executive Committee and believes that much of the strain would be eased if the Israeli withdrawal begins on time.

Christopher promised to convey Arafat's concern to Rabin, and he said the United States is looking into the possibility of providing some non-lethal aid such as surplus vehicles to the embryonic Palestinian police force that is supposed to replace Israeli troops when they depart.

But he also made clear that the US role in helping the Palestinians will be confined primarily to economic assistance and that the Clinton administration believes the PLO and Israel should work out their future security relationships by themselves.

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The peace process and the centrality of Syria

By Stephen S. Rosenfeld

WASHINGTON—Stonings in the streets and scurryings in the corridors of power in the Middle East obscure a bold American bid to carry off four Arab-Israeli peace agreements—the one that Israel made in September with the PLO plus others with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan—in a year.

The key to this emerging Clinton administration design is to draw in Syria, and soon. This is a principal purpose of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's trip to the region. Not that Israel's other Arab neighbors—Egypt has already made peace—can be taken for granted. But Syria is the power among them. Its record in negotiations is defiant. It demands full territorial return even while rejecting Israel's demand for full peace. Yet its participation is essential to a regional settlement.

The new consideration is that Syria's longtime leader, Hafez Al Assad, no longer has the full hand that earlier let him manipulate the regional game. He has lost his great-power patron in Moscow and has had trouble setting up a reliable supply line with the successor regime. Already militarily dominant, Israel is becoming stronger yet through its Washington connection and its own technological base. The Syrian military position stands to deteriorate even further in coming years. Its diplomatic isolation may increase as Palestinians and Jordanians go their own ways and as the Sunni world comes raggedly to terms

Assad—no longer has a full hand

with Israel. All this feeds what is seen as the calculating Assad's "strategic decision" to go for peace.

In early August, Israel was dabbling with the notion of a Syria-first approach. But then came the pre-emptive breakthrough with the PLO in September; it promised Israel the extra boon of escape from miserable, unwanted Gaza. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was strategically tempted to exploit any opportunity to take Syria out of a future anti-Israel war coalition led by, in the worst case, Iran. (This has become Israel's strategic priority and explains, for instance, its quest for long-range F-15s.) But Rabin deemed it politically imprudent to ask his agitated electorate to digest Syria and Palestine initiatives at the same time.

Now, however, Rabin seems to be taking a new line—that a serious Syria initiative, one going beyond the barren exchange of opening positions, can unfold when implementation of a Palestinian accord begins. That's a finite time, if things go passably well.

For a while, Assad, witnessing Israel's peace openings to the PLO and Jordan, may have felt the United States was conniving to deny Syria recovery of its war-lost territory and assurance of its place in the Mideast sun. In fact, Assad was learning the unpalatable lesson that he had lost much of his spoiler's power. At first furious that he could no longer control the Palestinians, he was able to move toward the position that their cause was now someone else's burden. He has criticized the PLO's Yasser Arafat but has not disrupted his bid.

The United States is prepared and quietly pleased to deal with a diminished Assad. Washington did not want him to retreat into a corner beyond diplomatic reach. Certainly it did not want him to mobilize the militants who are his to leash or unleash. American officials have had the task of convincing Assad that only in negotiations can he expect to serve Syria's territorial and security goals.

Is he ready? His ambassador was there on the White House south lawn. He has trimmed his responses to acts like Morocco's welcome of Rabin that formerly provoked his cold retaliation. Slow down, he signals Jordan, evidently realizing that each forward Jordanian and Palestinian step shaves his bargaining position. As though to build up his position, he invites the United States to savor Syria's strategic centrality. He continues to insist he favors "a peace of the brave" with Israel. Presumably he sees as part of it a link with the United States—perhaps a link at least as good as Egypt's Anwar Sadat got for leading the Arabs to peace with Israel in the1970s.

But Sadat was not only first. He led a country open to certain Western ways to a degree Assad cannot match. Syria is needed for a regional settlement, though some argue (shortsightedly) that its toothlessness makes such a settlement less than urgent. To produce a settlement, however, Assad needs the United States. He wants Americans in the middle. It would be a switch for him to go the PLO's Oslo route.

Middle East chess has never been more engrossing. At the moment the hot game is on the Israeli-Palestinian board. If American diplomacy works, Israel and Syria will have a go. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

A view from America:

The US too must abide by nuclear guidelines

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

THE MOST popular American buzz-word in international affairs of late has become North Korea. The major focus of this 1950-53 conflict is its refusal today to allow international inspection teams to ascertain whether it is using its nuclear knowledge to amass armaments. North Korea is now saying that it would allow certain sites to be inspected, something which the US considers unsatisfactory.

United States officials are now discussing both incentives and sanctions as a way of either enticing or forcing North Korea to consent to non-nuclear proliferation and on-going inspections. Pure logic would indicate that sanctions would have very little effect. It is difficult to apply economic sanctions on an economy that is virtually on a subsistence level.

Thus US officials must turn to the incentives option, and determine just what it would take to convince that country to cease developing—in whatever stage—its nuclear arsenal. And if they fail in this, they should be made to realize the ramifications and implications of all this and not just for North Korea. For other nations aspiring to become nuclear powers are all too eager to meet their own goals. A few are known openly: Pakistan, Indonesia, and, almost certainly, Algeria.

But to give credence to the US insistence that North Korea allow inspection, first we must be willing to demand the same of our friends. Inspection teams must be sent to Israel, South Africa, and India. And most importantly, let us not forget the classic countries hoarding nuclear weapons: the United States, France, Britain, and in the former USSR, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine.

Of this group, France has been particularly obstinate in expressing its disdain for external controls, and has overtly avowed its intention to continue testing its nuclear missiles. (This chauvinistic stance is particularly inflammatory to the Algerians, which, while still under France's colonization, the latter openly tested atomic bombs in the Algerian desert.)

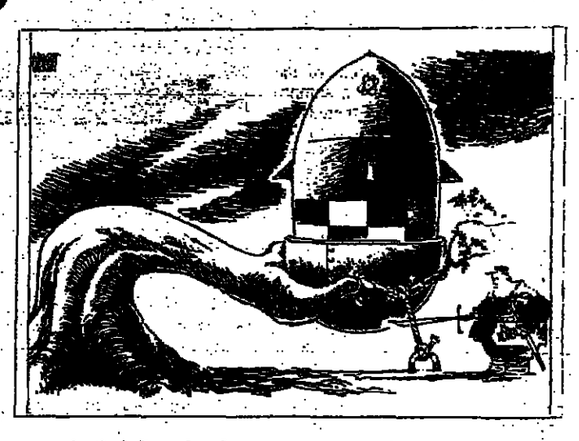
Nuclear weapons served a valid purpose during the Cold War, most obviously as a balancing factor. Hawks like former US President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would maintain that nuclear weapons maintained the peace by acting as a deterrent force.

Pure logic would indicate that sanctions would have very little effect. It is difficult to apply economic sanctions on an economy that is virtually on a subsistence level

But today the only justification for the classic nuclear powers to have these weapons of destruction is to intimidate possible or future adversaries on hold. The US's New World Order assumes that aggression shall not be allowed by the international community.

Selective application of the New World Order, however, (today's Bosnia), renders the entire principle hypocritical. To place credence in the New World Order, the big powers—notably the nuclear armed—should begin a serious effort toward denuclearizing their arsenals and diverting their resources toward development and improvement of living conditions both at home and abroad.

Most wars are directly or indirectly a result of dire economic conditions. Using resources now allocated to armaments would significantly reduce the causes of war as people around the world would begin reaping social and economic benefits—the "peace dividend" so frequently espoused by George Bush.



When a society has achieved certain standards and benefits, then it does have something to lose in case of conflict. Following their instinct for survival, the people of a society would be much less inclined to augment hostilities, especially if these would culminate in full-fledged war.

The present situation in North Korea is just a minor manifestation of the problem that festers under the skin. Forcing that country to stop its nuclear armaments program would be akin to putting a bandage on a cancerous tumor. As with the medical situation in the United States, we need a comprehensive plan that will place emphasis on both preventive and curative measures. Additionally, we must be willing to recognize it to be able to deal with it even-handedly, both with friend and potential foe alike.

And, unless the United States has declared itself to be the police of the world, then, like charity, it must begin at home. ■

Islam and the West

Entrenched prejudice and ignorance

By Professor Akbar Ahmad

PRINCE CHARLES has rushed in where angels fear to tread, for to start a discussion on Islam and the West is to enter dangerous territory. The Prince is no longer dealing with what many see as eccentric but harmless interests like ecology and architecture. In examining Islam and the West he confronts entrenched prejudice, hatred and ignorance, sometimes 1000 years old and on both sides.

What then impelled him in his speech in Oxford to step into what he himself described as an area covered in "minefields"? Was it the desire to adopt a new cause? Or some deep-rooted impulse to flirt with danger, to go where no royal has gone before?

The Prince's answers are convincing: they rest in the firm belief that the two—Islam and the West—have "much to learn from each other," that what binds them is more powerful than anything which creates misunderstandings between them. For example, both believe in family values, respect for knowledge and compassion for the poor. Yet their "misunderstanding remains dangerously high."

There is also, of course, the very really physical presence of Islam: a global population of one billion Muslims; one and a half to two million in the UK (with 500 mosques); their presence in the Commonwealth is another link with the British. "Islam is all around us" noted the Prince correctly, "and yet distrust, even fear persist."

The relationship between the two in a real and dramatic sense stands at the crossroads. Understanding and dialogue improve the situation.

One way to soothe the West's fears of Islam is to show how much Europe has been influenced by Islam, to illustrate what is common. Europeans borrowed academic life, medicine, philosophy, and music from Muslim Spain. Islam was the most tolerant of religions, allowing Christians and Jews to live and worship in Muslim lands. Muslim Spain was the zenith of Islamic culture and Cordoba, the capital, a glittering jewel of a city. It boasted 400,000 books in its libraries— more than in the combined libraries of the rest of Europe. But we have heard this argument before. The answer to it is: So what? We need to know about the contemporary relationship between Islam and the West.

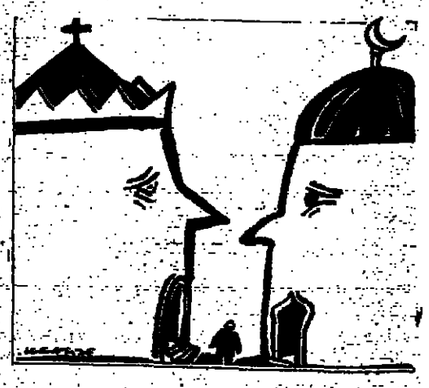
What is missed in the discussion here is the genuine anguish and anger in Muslim society at the emerging world order rooted in materialism and consumerism. But all traditional societies are worried about some trends of consumer capitalism—drugs, divorce, alcoholism, AIDS. These are causing concern not only to Muslims, but to Hindus, Jews and indeed traditional Christians.

By stating his argument in this manner the Prince universalized the problem. It was no long-term issue between Islam and the West, but between one kind of life and another; between modernity and tradition.

The core—and most controversial part of the Prince's message was a call to challenge the "acquisitive" and "exploitative" side of western civilization. He pointed out the divided and bankrupt inner life of the West. In contrast, Islam remains socially integrated and spiritually whole: its spirituality has much to teach Western materialism.

This will be too much for most people in the West. It is fine for a man of humility, learning and introspection, a scholar-prince. But for others, even those who do not see the world through ethnocentric glasses, this will cause outrage. Ideas of racial and cultural superiority still inform the way people think.

The tabloids will be screaming for royal blood, veins dripping with vitriol. "Ayatollah Charlie go home to Tehran" they will shriek. Much of the spiteful and superficial response will reflect the general contempt for Islam.



Others will respond by being personally vicious about Charles himself. They will see his interest in Islam as another royal fad. More unkind hacks will say a man who talks to plants deserves Islam—that Islam and the Prince deserve each other. There's something seriously unhealthy in the relationship between the British royal family and the press.

Some Muslims, too, will be unhappy. Adopting a characteristic holier-than-thou attitude, they will say: "Who's Charles to teach us about Islam? Why does he assume we need him to speak on our behalf?"

All this will be a pity, for Charles has a unique platform from which to address matters of universal concern in a serious and informed manner. His involvement alone ensures that the subject will be widely covered. And above all, he underlines the dignity that is a birth-right of all human begins.

But while agreeing with the direction of the speech, I must point out the classic mistake of depict-

Continued on page 5

From revolution to state building

The PLO's unsettled times

By Kim Murphy

TUNIS—The photographs and paintings were off the walls. The embroidered slipcovers were off the sofas and packed away in boxes. In the hollow silence of an almost empty villa, Yusif A Sayigh prepared to abandon, perhaps forever, the revolution he has fought with his fine mind for 45 years.

It was with a sense of frustration, dashed hopes and a little fear that Sayigh, the Palestine Liberation Organization's senior economic planner, boarded an outbound flight Friday, having, at least for a time, *given up the* fight.

Sayigh, the man who has overseen the preparation of the PLO's $11.6 billion economic development plan, is a 77-year-old economist, a former lecturer at Harvard, Princeton and Oxford, who finds *himself in a strange position*: He is at odds with Palestinian radicals, who are angry at his key role in the PLO's new peace strategy with Israel. And now he is at odds with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who has bristled at Sayigh's insistent demands that the PLO of the future be democratic and accountable, and not simply subject to the whims of the Palestinian chief.

For PLO leaders, these are unsettled times. The deadline approaches for signing an interim peace accord with Israel, but Saturday, nine days before Israeli troops are scheduled to begin withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, the PLO has still not designated any government to take over in the Occupied Territories when the Israelis withdraw.

A growing number of PLO advisers—from Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Maazen, a close Arafat adviser who signed the initial peace agreement with Israel on 13 September, to Sayigh—are expressing impatience with the PLO chairman, who single-handedly makes nearly all decisions for the organization. They criticize his refusal to delegate responsibility and decision-making at a time when the movement's future depends most on efficient and responsible action.

Arafat can no longer claim the unequivocal support of the PLO's 18-member Executive Committee: *Six of the committee's original* members have resigned in opposition to the peace plan and others have boycotted *its meetings* out of impatience with Arafat's dictatorial style.

And the challenges in the next *few weeks—completing a peace agreement with Israel, planning* the management and expenditure of $2.5 billion from foreign donors to develop Gaza and Jericho, beginning the transfer of authority and security to Palestinian hands in the Israeli-occupied territories, creating a new government from scratch—are the greatest in the history of the 28-year-old revolutionary movement.

"Developing ourselves from a revolution to a state: I don't call it difficult. I call it pain. It is the *same pain felt by a woman* giving birth to a child, but one that's normal," Arafat adviser Bassam Sharif said. "And pain for a Palestinian is not a strange thing. We have suffered a lot. We don't mind suffering a lot more to establish our strength."

In the past few days, however, Palestinians have mounted unprecedented demands for retaking control of the PLO's *evolution*.

After two days of meetings in Tunis, the PLO Executive Committee ordered Saturday that representatives of the leadership, and not just Arafat alone, would begin directing the peace talks with Israel. The Cabinet-in-exile also moved to draft a constitutional charter and the broad outlines of an economic policy for the new Palestinian entity.

Sayigh's story is typical of the dilemma facing Palestinian technocrats and intellectuals as they try to move the PLO away from a past of paternalism, patronage and violence and toward a future of institutions, pluralism and accountability—and they are running out of time to do it.

Sayigh, who has been the PLO's main link with the World Bank, says he has found since his public clashes with Arafat that he is under unusual scrutiny these days by Arafat's elite security network, Force 17. That makes him not at all reluctant to get out of Tunis for a few weeks—or forever.

Yet with his reputation as a peace advocate, he is a bit uneasy about returning to his home and family in militant Lebanon, where at least two pro-peace PLO officials have been shot in the past month.

The son of a Presbyterian minister, soft-spoken, goateed and *partial to tweed, Sayigh is not at* all like the pistol-toting Arafat. He worked closely with Ahmed Suleiman Qre'a, also known as Abu Alaa, who conducted the secret talks with Israel in Oslo, Norway, that led to the initial peace accord. The two men worked to fashion a new Palestinian economic institution that would collect the billions of dollars in foreign aid bound for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, account for it responsibly and channel it toward worthwhile development projects in the Occupied Territories.

What he and Qre'a proposed for the Palestinian Economic Development and Reconstruction Authority was a board of governors composed of economists, bankers, planners and develop*ment specialists that would meet* regularly to tend the financial needs of the fledgling Palestinian government.

Bowing to the politicians, they also proposed a large advisory council, headed by Arafat and giving due representation to the various political and family factions within the PLO, that would meet twice a year in a general policy-making role. Instead, Arafat came back with a proposal naming himself as head of the board of governors.

After a collision with the World Bank and international donors, who feared a return to the fiscal irresponsibility of the PLO's past, a compromise was achieved. Under it, Arafat remains the point man and one of his top political aides, PLO Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi, acts as vice chairman.

Although the international community has signed off on the compromise, Sayigh says he has grave fears that the structure will allow Arafat to dictate which contracts are awarded to whom, and make economic development subject to political whim.

Sayigh

Thus, the elderly economist has clashed frequently with the PLO chairman, most recently this past week, when he presented his arguments about accountability and transparency in Palestinian finances at a meeting of the PLO leadership.

"I looked around the room when I was making my arguments, and everyone would very slightly nod their head—enough for me to see they supported me, but not enough so that he (Arafat) could see it," Sayigh recalled. "There were four of them who *didn't open their mouths all evening*, from 8:30 until 1 in the morning."

Arafat, he says, was arguing for the creation of a Palestinian development bank, a $300 million to $500 million institution that, Sayigh argued, needed not only a great deal of planning but the foundation of new laws authorizing it.

In light of the general climate of unease that surrounds the PLO's efforts to make peace, Sayigh decided it would be better if he left Tunis. He will come back in five weeks, he says, if he has decided that the PLO is truly committed to democracy and accountability.

"What I have been trying to say is that I am not against Arafat," he said. "I'm really serving him as a head of state. I'm not seeking power. I'm not envious of anyone else's power. It's simply that I feel this is not the optimal way of doing things." ■

LA Times- Washington Post News Service

Lebanon: Paying for other people's peace

Lebanon: Ready for peace?

JIBCHIT, Lebanon—In this sun-splashed village, where slow-footed donkeys and a klatch of men sipping tea in front of the grocery store animate a somnolent autumn afternoon, there is little to suggest that this is the heart of a tedious, deadly war against Israel.

But look again. On the wall at the local school are pictures not of the Lebanese president, but of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's late supreme leader. A discreet poster near the entrance to town, on close inspection, shows a raised fist clenching a machine gun—the trademark of *Hezbollah*—the militant *Shiite* Muslim group.

And the clinking of hammers on stone along the upper reaches of this hillside hamlet calls attention to many new or half-built homes. Hard at work are crews from Jihad Construction Co., which already has rebuilt 1200 houses destroyed or damaged in July by Israeli artillery and warplanes when they zeroed in on this village, rife with *Hezbollah* guerrillas.

"The greatest defeat that Israel has faced from 1948 to the present is the Islamic resistance in the south of Lebanon," said Amar Abul Hassan, *Hezbollah's spokesman in Jibchit*. "They can kill us, massacre us, destroy our houses, kill our women and children, slaughter our elderly people. But there remains one thing in us, and that is the resistance."

As Palestinian and Israeli negotiators work out details of a peace agreement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a forgotten war remains a flash point in the 45-year Arab-Israeli conflict. It plays out day by day in the tortured villages that form the frontier between Lebanon and Israel's *self-declared security zone*.

As Israeli negotiators meet Saudis and Moroccans to haggle over economic relations, as Palestinians bicker over details of self-rule in Jericho and Gaza, as Damascus and Tehran threaten and flirt with Tel Aviv, their wars these days are fought, as they have been for years, at a distance, in the olive groves and tomato fields of Lebanon.

The heaviest clashes since the 13 September signing of the Palestinian-Israeli accord broke out *last month in southern Lebanon* when *Hezbollah* guerrillas fired Katyusha rockets and stormed into the security zone, capturing 12 soldiers from the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army.

Israel retaliated with an artillery barrage on 10 *Shiite* Muslim villages, its helicopter gunships and warplanes hitting *Hezbollah* targets in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

The clashes, the worst in what has become an almost daily tit-for-tat shelling skirmish on the frontier, were uneasy reminders of Israel's punishing seven-day assault on southern Lebanon in late July. That operation, dubbed Operation Accountability, was designed to halt Lebanese attacks on Israeli targets in the security zone and northern Israel.

The aerial and artillery assault killed more than 100 civilians, destroyed more than 900 homes and damaged 4000 others in 70 villages throughout southern Lebanon. About 300,000 residents fled their homes.

Lebanon, which seeks hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid to help repair the damage, is bearing the brunt of the Arab-Israeli conflict, even as it faces the disastrous consequences of 15 years of a civil war whose repair bill now totals about $20 billion.

In recent months, as neighboring Syria drags its feet on signing a peace agreement with Israel, American officials have quietly tried to persuade Lebanon to move quickly to the bargaining table and end the war that no one appears able, or even especially inclined, to win.

In advance of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's recent visit to the United States, newspapers here were full of a "Lebanon First" option, purportedly suggested by the Americans. Under this plan, Lebanon would comply with a long-standing American and Israeli demand to disarm *Hezbollah* and move in the Lebanese army to control the south.

In exchange, Israel would withdraw from the security zone that now includes 10 percent of Lebanon's territory and, under one version of the proposal circulated here, South Lebanese Army members would be integrated into the Lebanese army or repatriated to Israel.

But Lebanon appears to have said no to an early peace. And the reasons have much to do with Lebanon's intricate political and economic links to the rest of the Middle East and its role as a barometer of conflict in the region.

"There are some voices in Lebanon who say, 'If we can make progress, let's do it,'" said Beirut political analyst Tawfik Mishlawi. "We don't need to move side by side with the Syrians. But there are no Lebanese who say, 'Let's have a separate peace treaty.'"

The simple answer is that Syria, whose 40,000 troops stationed here dictate that Lebanese *policy is made in Damascus*, is not ready for peace with Israel. And Syria has a substantial interest in seeing groups—like *Hezbollah*, Islamic Jihad and radical Palestinian organizations—keep up the pressure against Israel on the Lebanese border, even as Damascus' delegates are talking peace in negotiations in Washington.

But for its own reasons, Lebanon itself remains skeptical about any early peace with Israel. Peace raises a host of troubling problems to which a nation still trying to undo the damage of a civil war may not be ready to respond.

How, for example, would Lebanon integrate about 75,000 civilians who have been living under Israeli domination in the security zone for more than a decade? And what would Lebanon do with the South Lebanese Army?

Equally troubling is a widespread sentiment in Beirut that the low-grade conflict in the south may be better than the kind of peace it would bring.

A full-scale Arab-Israeli peace, many here fear, would have more devastating economic consequences for Lebanon than for any Arab country because it would shut Beirut out of its traditional role as deal-maker and middleman and open the door for Israeli *economic domination of the* region after years of military dominion.

Economic openness with Israel would be "more dangerous than war," predicted one Beirut banker. Such feelings are only heightened by a sense of unfairness; while Lebanon has received pledges of $1.3 billion in foreign aid to repair 15 years of civil war—most of it loans—the Palestinians, whom the Lebanese largely blame for their war, already have promises of $2.5 billion.

The government also is butting heads with Washington over US refusal to lift the ban on American citizens traveling to Lebanon.

The ban has helped to foster the global business community's devastating reluctance to make badly needed investments here.

But Washington's demand that *Hezbollah* be disarmed before the ban can be lifted raises wider questions about longer-term regional alliances throughout the Middle East, as Syria, Iran and even Turkey contemplate a strategic future that still seems inexorably bound to a tiny land called Lebanon.

"Lebanon has paid for other people's wars," a Beirut columnist complained recently. "Must it now pay for other people's peace?" ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek

Christopher jogging for peace

■ Mr Warren Christopher is back in the region, in order to attempt, yet again, to break the deadlock in the Middle East peace negotiations. At one point, it seemed that the declaration of the Gaza-Jericho agreement, resulting from the secret negotiations in Oslo, were a deal ready for implementation. However, the fact remains that both the Palestinians and the Israelis are still negotiating technical points ranging from the size of Jericho to the control of the crossing points over the Jordan river.

Neither the rhetoric of Mr Arafat, nor that of Mr Rabin, indicates any sort of confidence in each other's sincerity in implementing the objectives of what has been achieved in Oslo. But what has been achieved in the secret negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track? Obviously, the secrecy of the negotiations provides both sides with the convenient excuse to fudge difficult issues, and acquire plenty of room for mutual recriminations without any commitment.

Publicly at least, Gaza-Jericho was presented as a signed and sealed agreement, then as a declaration of principles. Afterwards, by some chance metamorphosis, it has become an agreement in order to be able to negotiate further a peace agreement. But the date of 13 December has already been set for the Palestinian transitional government, and Israel is still eliminating the leadership of both *Hamas* and *Fatah* in the West Bank in order to provide an equilibrium in the balance of forces between the two groups in the Occupied Territories. Are the killings in the Occupied Territories to anyone's advantage?—to the state of Israel, or to the future Palestinian entity? Such questions will not be answered by Mr Christopher's visit, neither a solution to the riddle of Palestinian-Israeli talks.

It would have been more fruitful for all parties concerned if Mr Christopher could have met all of the leaders involved, including *Egypt, in one Arab capital in a show of unity of fate and purpose*. Instead, the parties are all meeting with Mr Christopher in an atmosphere of suspicion, each in pursuit of narrow interests and thus falling into the wishes and requirements of Israel, (who wishes to reach piecemeal solutions with individual Arab countries at the expense of the others via secret and unpublicized negotiations). Mr Christopher may well be carrying fresh proposals this time to help speed up the momentum of negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track, as well as for Palestinian self-rule. But so long as the unified Arab position is unclear, the Arab countries involved directly in the negotiations may harm each others' interests and be forced at some point to work purposefully against each other in order to achieve small gains which in the long run may prove to be historical errors.

Rather than approaching the peace question in a comprehensive manner and upholding the notion of the indivisibility of peace, we are still essentially negotiating as individuals and pursuing rules set by Israel. The talk in Arab capitals is that of coordination and continuous liasons, but each country is only acting for its self. There is no need to emphasize the historical importance of this era. Consequently, there is no need to repeat the call for unity among Arab ranks at this critical stage, for the notion of common sense is not exclusive to one time or space. Instead of forcing hasty seekers of individualistic solutions to tow the line for collective security and peace, all concerned seem to be desiring to break the ranks. If this suicidal approach continues, what will the results be with each of us working against each others' interests? Where will Mr Christopher's proposals end up?

This might be our last chance to unify our ranks. It may also make the job of Mr Christopher much easier.

Islam and the West

Continued from page 4

ing an ideal type of Muslim society. To take two examples: Islamic law and Islamic treatment of women are both seen as barbaric and cruel in the West. Charles is right to try to contextualize both, to underline that the Western view is incorrect and simplistic.

However, Charles needs to understand the Islamic law can only be successfully applied in a truly Islamic society. Most modern Muslim societies are riddled with corruption and nepotism. Harsh punishment such as whipping or cutting of hands are invariably reserved for either the poor or less privileged or those opposed to government.

On women, the Prince is right that they are not "second-class citizens in Islam", that they were *given rights to inherit* and to divorce, in the seventh Century, that today there are two female prime ministers in Muslim countries (Pakistan and Bangladesh).

The reality is more complex. Women's lives are difficult, and are made more so by the rapid changes now taking place. In the rural and tribal areas of most Muslim countries, few women inherit property or wield any political influence. Their lot at home is usually miserable, often with the threat of other wives being brought into the home. This is not Islamic teaching, it is male chauvinism.

But this is carping. The Prince summed up the essence of his message in an Arabic proverb:

"What comes from the lips reaches the ear.

What comes from the Heart reaches that heart."

I believe Prince Charles' message reached the heart. For his courage I admire him; for his predicament I feel for him. ■

The author is a fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge in the UK.

The Guardian

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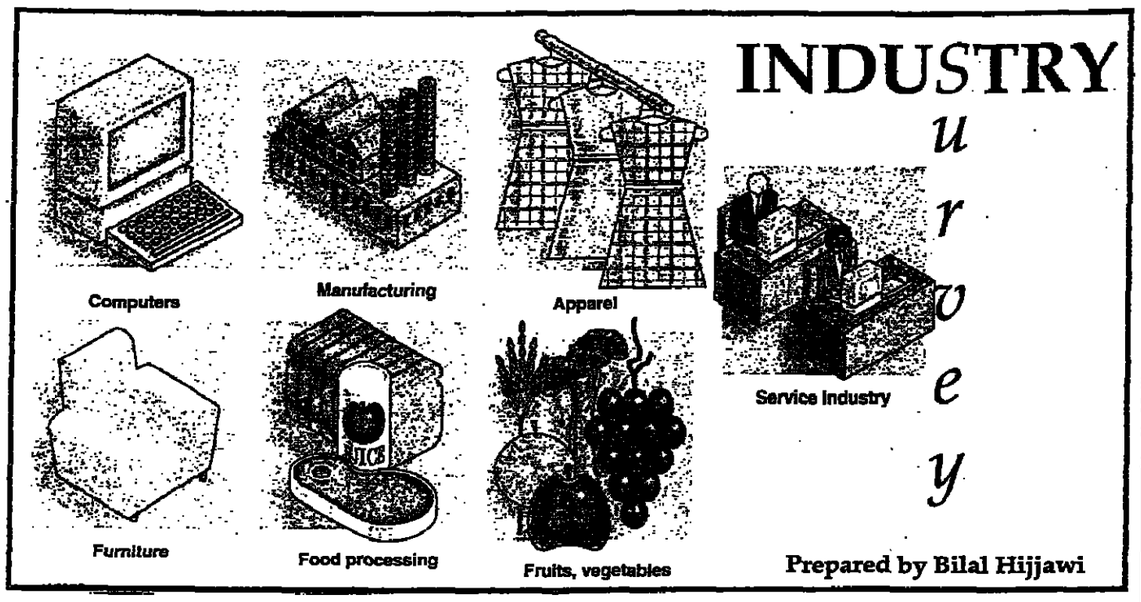


Jordan Spinning & Weaving Co.

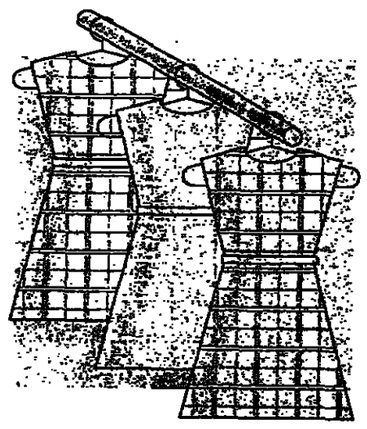
Business is good but competition is eating away the true potential

☛ Mr Emad El Shamma', general manager of the Jordan Spinning and Weaving Co., has managed to turn around the public shareholding company in record time. From a company relying on traditional markets until the Gulf War, the company has now become an export-led powerhouse. Exporting to markets in the European Community (EC), the company, which specializes in manufacturing yarn, has managed to secure buyers for its production until mid 1994. But even beyond its set potential, the company has sold twice its possible production capacity, thus allowing a substantial space for future developments.

"The last two years have been the years of restructuring," says Mr Shamma'. The company has introduced substantial changes by embarking on an ambitious capital procurement program to upgrade and expand its production. Located in Zerqa on 200 dunums with 30 dunums of covered real estate, the company now employs 450 workers. "Few people in Jordan have the technology we have. We have the latest available machines for studying and analyzing yarn," says Mr Shamma'. He adds that in order to compete, the company will have to introduce value added products to its production line.

Currently the company is adding 5000 square meters to the available work space. "We are expanding our warehouses, production space and offices to meet increases in demand," Mr Shamma' told *The Star*. The company has done so well that a water treatment plant costing JD 300,000 was introduced to the factory in anticipation of stronger future environmental regulations. The company, which has its own dye house has plans to add a silk screen facility to its factory, has begun supplying local distributors with ready-wear and knitted fabrics. These products bring more profits to the company because the manufacturing process brings an added value to the final price.

But can the company compete with Asian textile giants? The Asians manage to undercut any world price for raw and finished textile materials and no import customs are present on yarn imports in Jordan.

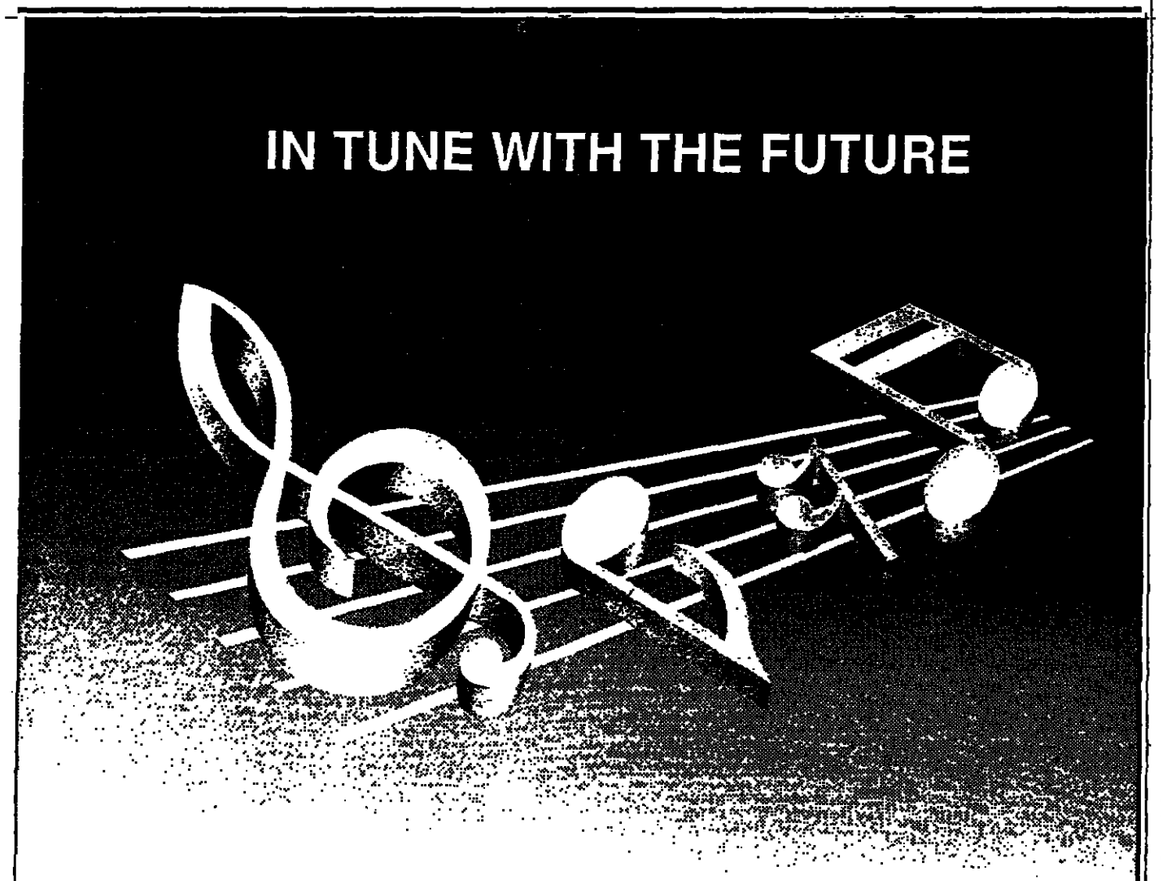


"This is hindering our expansion in production locally."

But according to Mr Shamma', his company struck some success by capitalizing on the local edge. "If a buyer needs to buy yarn from Asia he'd be limited to buying bulk. This requires a huge storage place," he says. Even then, the buyer of imported bulk will still need to grapple with delays and costly financial transactions. "Our customers have none of these inefficiencies. The local customer would buy the amount he deems fit for his needs and we deliver the shipment to his doorstep." There is also the option of facilitating the locally brokered deal through financing.

Competition comes from the Far East, Pakistan, Indochina and Bangladesh, but Turkey and Syria pose a serious competition because of their proximity to Jordan. "The Syrians are a very strong competitor," says Mr Shamma'. And "the Chinese have been dumping in the local market." He charges that they would sell their finished product for the price of the company's raw material. "They can afford to cut their prices to this level because the industry is highly sensitive to labor costs and Asia has the cheapest labor in the world," adds Mr Shamma'.

His company has participated in six international fairs in Europe last year and that has paid off well. Though the company gives due attention to the local market, export markets are where the serious money lies. In order to deal with the dangers inherent in relying too much on traditional markets, Mr Shamma' managed in a short time to open markets in Europe. A case of thanks but no thanks: "In the EC we managed to penetrate Germany, one of the toughest markets in the EC, independent of any Government or special national agency help." But the actual accomplishment "is that we are competing on the open international market," says Mr Shamma'. The yarn manufacturer is selling also to the British and US markets. The latter is promising good fortunes. "Our first shipment to the US market is worth JD 250,000 of locally manufactured goods." ■



Our corporate philosophy thrives on innovation, insightful answers and outstanding personal service. A philosophy created through our belief that banking is more about people than numbers. It's about the shared values and common goals that create strong bonds between banker and client. This harmony in partnership leads steadily towards achieving your long-term objectives and facing the challenges of the future.

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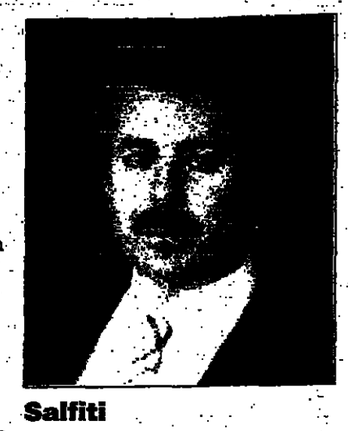
Union Bank
For Savings & Investment

Head Office 666148 - Amman.

Union Bank:

Banking should be a service that meets financial and business requirements, Salfiti

Editor's note: The following is the text of an interview with Mr Rajai Salfiti, general manager of Union Bank for savings and investment, which has expanded and diversified its operations and services recently.



Salfiti

Tell us something about the recent changes in your bank's operation?
We are implementing two types of changes, or improvements. One is through expansion, both physical expansion and services expansion. The other is through complete office automation and through implementing the latest technology throughout our system. Through expansion, we aim at providing our clients with our services wherever they may be. We want to provide our corporate and private clients with the required products and services and we aim to be totally accessible to them in any possible way. Through automation, we will be able to provide our clients with the most advanced services in the most up-to-date techniques. We are working towards leading our clients into the future. Banking should be a service that meets financial and business requirements in the most appropriate techniques. And in today's world these techniques are available through complete automation. The full banking spectrum which we offer must be tailored to our clients' every need and offered efficiently.

In Jordan and the region, what plans and strategies will Union Bank implement in 1994?
Given the absence of unforeseen disturbances throughout the region, we have considerable domestic potential. We are an investment bank, and that is exactly what we plan to do. Our investments will take various forms. We will focus on developing a strong and capable team of human resources who will lead our projects through. Our aim is to have a well structured, service-oriented team through which we will be able to provide wide investment alternatives for asset-hungry clients. We will work at developing new investment instruments which are already being implemented in other markets. And in today's business world, which is easily accessible through the development of information technology, we will adhere to a global perspective.

How would you summarize the role of your bank in the industrial sector?
Our role in the industrial sector has been a pioneering one. I am proud to say. We have been involved in the establishment of several industrial projects and in the management of some of these projects. Our most recent ventures are the take-over of a private audio-visual company which is established as a public shareholding company under the name Audio-Visual International Manufacturing AVIM, which manufactures eye-wear frames, contact lenses, and audio equipment.
We are also involved in a commercial and recreational compound, Jordan 2000 for Investments. This compound will include diverse outlets such as consumer goods, fast food, clothing, bookstores, music, cinemas, etc.
Another project is Union Tobacco & Cigarette Manufacturing, which will produce under license from a top international company a class-A brand of tobacco for the local market as well as for export. A chemicals and vegetable oils company is also underway. As you can see, we have carefully diversified our investment scopes rather than limiting ourselves to a certain industry.

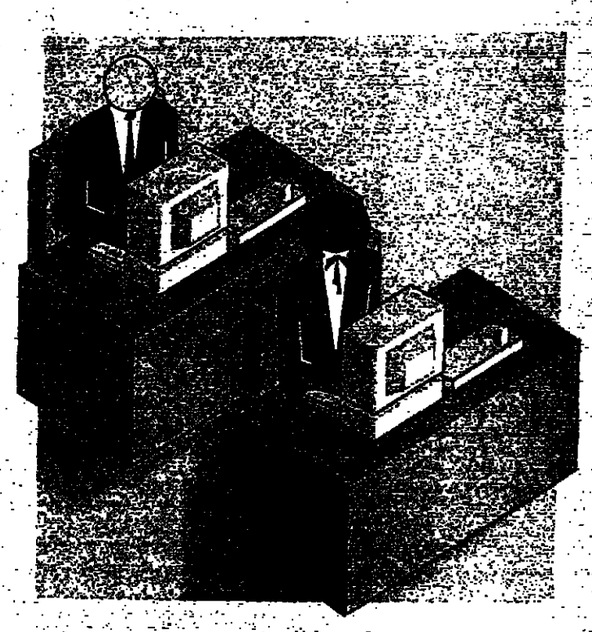
Jordanian banks are not very active in venture capital financing. Most loans go to traditional industries and/or for expansion purposes in existing companies. Is this true? If yes, Why? What will it take for bankers to finance ambitious entrepreneurial start-ups in the Kingdom?
In Jordan, the banks are mainly commercial banks. Investment banking is rather new. Within the previous couple of years, investment banks have been active and their role is involved in both venture capital and projects per se.
Bankers will finance ambitious entrepreneurial start-ups in the Kingdom given political confidence and stability both locally and regionally. We will work at nurturing the appropriate investment environments, and we will work very hard at establishing aggressive management to lead the way.

How harmful have credit ceilings been to your business?
We have always abided by the rules and laws set by CBJ and I can't say that we've had any problems with this issue.

Will there be serious competition from International banks if peace in the region becomes a reality?
International banks have always existed in the region, and yes they will work at strengthening their positions. But competition is healthy.
Today, competition anywhere lies within two aspects, management and automation. As far as Union Bank is concerned, that's where we're heading.

In your opinion, are people exaggerating the size of dividends Jordan hopes to reap in peace times?
No, I don't believe there is exaggeration. Jordan will benefit because we do enjoy a solid infrastructure. Labor is still considerably cheap, our laws are quite appropriate and money will come into the country through credible institutions. Diverse projects will be very feasible and money will circulate within the Kingdom.

How is the Government handling the fast changes affecting this side of the world? What should the Government do to prepare better for peace?
The Government should adopt a more flexible philosophy in some areas. The general environment should be presented in a more attractive manner. It should be more appealing to the foreign investor. The country as a whole should work towards opening up more for investors.



Joint ventures are one way of getting help to cope with change. What is your opinion? Is there any better way?
Joint ventures with well established foreign companies are excellent through which we are able to adopt an already studied and established basis. Joint ventures are healthy for the industry and for strengthening relations between nations. Through such projects we acquire the know-how of effective productivity and quality control.

Which sector in the country calls for special attention from banks? Which industry or sector is being ignored by banks and has potential?
Personally I believe tourism has great potential. Banks have not given this sector the necessary attention. We do have a rich nation with a great deal to offer. We should invest in this natural treasure and we should work hard towards nurturing service-oriented people to handle this sector.

How will introducing the Jordanian dinar in Palestine influence Jordan's local economy?
This is the first step towards economic unity between Jordan and Palestine and towards a unified currency. It will facilitate the trade of goods and the course of transportation, and will improve the rapport between the two peoples.

Should foreign debts be relieved, how will that affect us here?
This will increase our credibility as a nation, strengthen our JD and our foreign currency reserves. It will improve the state of our economy. The money will stay within the country and will strengthen our infrastructure. CBJ's role is rather strategic. They have been doing their best since the financial crisis. CBJ has worked towards stabilizing the situation, and the their monetary policy to a great extent has reflected favorably on the economy. ■

Jordan's first Tissue Culture lab:

Celtis blossoms into business success

☛ Tissue culture is the operation by which virus-free plants are duplicated inside a highly controlled environment. Plantlets are the product of such process and they constitute the commercial reward of tissue culture. These very young plants should concern us most because their supply numbers are only limited by demand in any market place. The process interferes with nature's selective mechanisms by introducing the human element to plant selection.

The process can duplicate the healthiest plant and this is why markets are interested in them. Tissue culture became known to the commercial world only in the mid 1970s. Celtis, financed by the Sukhtian Group and conceived by Ms Deemah Sukhtian, is the first privately-held tissue culture venture in the Middle East. The venture sunk about JD .5 million with the aim of commercially duplicating cut flowers in Jordan. Operational since early 1991, Celtis was given access to 50 dunums of the Sukhtian land to implement the project, south of Amman. Tissue culture characteristically requires investors' longest breath. When she was interviewed by *The Star* last year, Ms Sukhtian, partner and president of the Celtis tissue culture labs, talked about her mixed and less than optimistic feelings about the company. She was afraid the high risk may not justify the lab's future commercial viability and she wasn't sure the Jordanian market was conducive to such ambitious projects. "Scoring success with Celtis translated to my initiation into the business world. These were the most critical moments of my career," she said one year ago.

But today, the Celtis investment has run up to over JD 1 million expanding its accessed farm land to over 100 dunums. The Sukhtian Group is a content investor and Ms Sukhtian's forecasts are much more hopeful. "The local market is beginning to pay off now. Customer awareness has increased and their appreciation of tissue cultured plants has been enhanced greatly," she says. Some distributors are contracting Celtis for the production of the plants of their choice. The lab has expanded into a 28-strong technical force and two researchers have been added. And the operation appears to be on track. The business acumen of Ms Sukhtian and the pioneering persistence of Mazen Daqaq, chief researcher, blossomed into commercial successes finally.

Celtis which started experimenting with potatoes has expanded its production into producing under license specific cut flowers, patented by the Dutch company Florist. By being a licensee, the Jordanian company has been authorized to produce these flowers locally for sales in the region.

Celtis is currently exporting to Lebanon and Syria and to Europe while its markets in the Gulf have been increasing steadily. But that translated to equipment procurement. "We plan on purchasing new equipment including a chromatography machine for our new virus testing facility," says Mr Daqaq. This addition to the Celtis labs will also be used for testing samples of imported produce. "By taking samples and introducing an anti serum to the plant extract, the machine would be able to tell us the virus contents in the plant samples," explains Mr Daqaq. A necessary test and a buffer against the potential of a huge loss to many framers. The average cost of imported crops cost farmers over JD 50,000, and that means customers to Celtis.

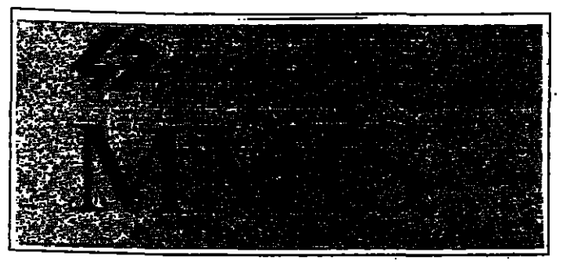
Another expansion was the addition of a fully equipped glass house, several greenhouses and a management information system. Such additions are important for the expansion strategy and "we have incorporated ambitious plans to develop further in the future," adds Ms Sukhtian.

"We are working towards producing our own patented breed of cut flowers," says Mr Daqaq. If Celtis accomplishes this set of goals and world markets embrace the new product, the sky is the limit, Ms Sukhtian predicts. Anywhere, a patented flower is sold, royalties will be paid to the Jordanian Celtis.

Yet according to Mr Daqaq, the fascinating rewards of tissue culture is none of the above. "We will eventually be able to conserve Jordan's flora and if you ask me: *I'll start with our* national flower the Black Iris," says Mr Daqaq. "Do you believe Jordan has 12 different species of orchids in its flora?" And Ms Sukhtian couldn't agree more. "I can confidently say that we are one step away from performing genetical engineering on plants." This is the process by which scientists are able to isolate, select or introduce the better genes to a plant's cell. Such procedures would render it possible to keep, for example, the beauty of the Black Iris while isolating its inherent fragility or weaknesses. "Imagine a Jordan spring desert covered with Black Irises!" ■

MMIS
Movers and shakers in the world of management consultancy

☛ **MMIS, management consultants, established in 1988 by the Industrial Development Bank, has sought the strategic alliance of the Chicago-based AT Karney in its early stages. Gradually the company has managed to become independent, nurturing a client-base of Jordan's major industries. MMIS at a later stage was privately bought by its senior partners. The company, which was the first business consultancy in Jordan, is quietly working towards the betterment of the business community in the Kingdom. Located in Amman, MMIS, is currently cooperating with international management consultancy from the US, Europe and the Gulf. They provide MMIS with a wide and resourceful base of expertise in management and technical issues. MMIS helps customers face the various challenges put forth by today's ever changing business environment. *The Star* asked Mr Khaled Toukan and Ms Salwa Bamieh, two senior partners at the firm, about what their views are on the industry scene in Jordan under peace. Excerpts from both interviews follow.**



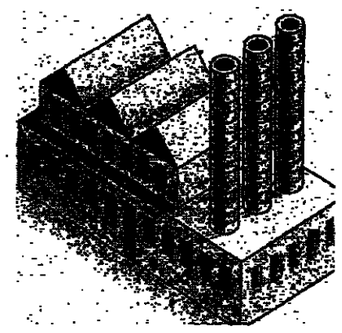
In light of the recent breakthrough in peace negotiations—What characterized your client enquiries recently?
Our customers ask us about opportunities present in the West Bank and Gaza, especially those relating to businesses involved in construction materials and services. They're hoping the construction sector in the West Bank will pick up eventually. Recently, MMIS secured a management contract to run Al Mashriq, a business consulting unit. This was jointly established with the major partner, Cairo Amman Bank in Ramallah. CAB has never stopped its banking operations. Al Mashriq's job will begin by locating opportunities in the Occupied Territories and fostering a solid business relationship with the Jordanian side. The unit will locate areas for economic industrial development to help its clients identify successful projects and joint ventures. We think that demand for management consultancy will rise with the expansion of the Palestinian economy, especially among Jordanian businesses vying for new market opportunities.

Some Jordanians see a retracting economy under peace. Where does MMIS stand on this issue?
The situation is that the industrialists will not close down their factories [in Jordan] and transfer them to other markets under peace. If anything, they will be happy to expand their production to supply the needs of the new markets. They are not talking about a fragmented peace but a peace that will bring to the region a lasting settlement.
Arab-Arab ties should improve under these circumstances bringing about an expanded consumer base. The economy may not grow at the rate optimists expect but it will not retract at any rate under peace.
The returnees invested heavily in industry as evident in the expansion experienced in Sahab. Who ever invested in Jordan will need to realize the rewards of his investment before he thinks of other locations for expansion. Those people will not close shop and leave Jordan.

What characterizes Jordanian industry?
Chemical industries are developing fast in Jordan: Pharmaceuticals among other such industries. Jordan still leads in construction and is getting there in consumer-product industries.
Recently, investors have been venturing into non-conventional industries. New generation pharmaceuticals, bio-technology, software and tissue culture reflect such ventures.
What has been evident in industry in the last two years is the proliferation of industries complementary to the established ones. Such industries would include packaging industries and others complementing the pharmaceutical industries like gelatin capsules and raw materials.

What influence will peace have on investments?
International investment will increase under peace especially as the world already knows Jordan as a free economy. Jordan has been doing much to develop in that direction [enhancing Jordan's receptivity to investments]. The Government is paying more attention now to the systems that can nurture these investments.
Nevertheless, current laws are still investment-friendly compared to others in the region; not many limitations are present on foreign investments. An investor is allowed to withdraw his original investment or profits easily.
There are no problems with dealing in foreign currency and exchange. We do not have heavy regulation of monetary exchanges. Many foreign companies already established in the Gulf are expected to become serious contenders for those new entrants in this region.

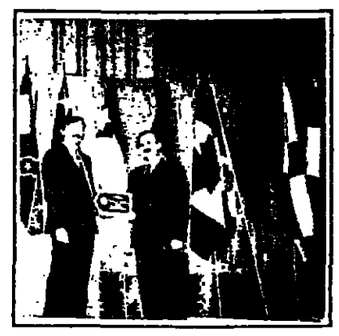
Which industries are most suitable to Jordan? What industry should witness developments in the near future?
The recipe for success is to establish an industry that uses available resources in Jordan or in the region. These industries are less sensitive to political turmoil in the region. If, for instance, a helicopter is made in Jordan, production would be dependent on the supplier and extremely vulnerable to any political changes in the area; cars involve such risks as well. Other industries like foods and consumer products are less risky because demand will always be present regardless of political or other changes. Other suitable industries for Jordan are labor intensive industries with a technological edge, like tissue culture and electronics manufacturing, in addition to service industries such as transportation and tourism related projects.
Then we have the large industry section which Jordan should consider upgrading. Peace would probably make such expansion possible. The Jordanian market may not have justified this before, but if peace brings a larger market, the expansion of chemical and other industries becomes more feasible. The proposed Dead Sea complex of industries should also be feasible under peace.



Peace will surely bring stronger competition inside the Kingdom. How will industry behave under peace ?
If foreign industries want to come here they will have to find a local partner. And then they will end up using the available local resources; so the economy as a whole is expected to benefit to a great extent from such a presence.
Industries dependent on the supply of local raw material will not suffer because of that edge which renders them more competitive. The existence of a strong base of industrial and human resources would encourage joint-venture opportunities between international and Pan-Arab entities. ■

EMS:
An investment in waste

☛ Little drops of water compose the oceans of today. And likewise, each energy joule conserved is money in the bank. Money saved is an economy saved. "A little efficiency in our energy consumption habits will translate into substantial national savings worth over $100 million annually—the value of wasted energy," according to Energy Management Services (EMS) General Manager Khalid Bushnaq. Yet this only touches the tip of the iceberg of possible energy savings. "This is the value of wasted energy that can be recovered using low-cost, no-cost or smart housekeeping measures," Mr Bushnaq explained.



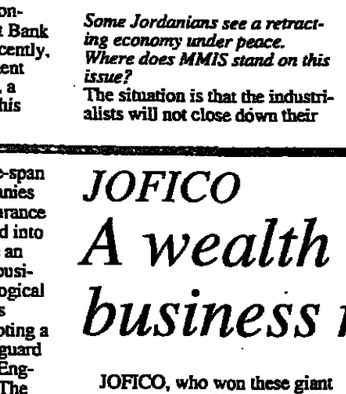
Earlier on and before the company began operations, a survey corroborated EMS fears that the better part of energy goes to waste in Jordan. It was in this waste that EMS saw untapped markets and opportunity. EMS record savings on an energy bill for one of their industrial clients was more than 65 percent. But the average savings for customers ranges between 25 and 30 percent. "The minimum savings we have managed to achieve is 11.5 percent," said Mr Murad. Last year alone, EMS saved its customers more than JD .5 million.
The fee EMS gets is a percentage of the energy savings they help their clients realize in the first place.
Speak of the perfect market niche! The results are noble: EMS saves its clients money releasing it for technological advancements or any good cause and the environment is conserved. Interviewing the executives inside a half-lit room meant more than a few dinars saved by EMS; it showed commitment to the idea this company was selling.
These few fluorescent bulbs did not prevent one from reading the small letters on the award next to Mr Bushnaq and his partner Mr Samir Murad, chairman of the company's board. The award stated that Mr Khalid Bushnaq is recipient of the World Energy Congress Award for outstanding achievements in the field of energy. A significant accomplishment: "Jordan's flag was put up in the World Energy Congress and it will remain hoisted there forever—the first Arab flag to be raised there," Mr Murad said. Winners, members of the Engineers Association, are chosen every four years from around the world.
Why flood light when a simple stream is sufficient? "Generating electricity burns valuable fossil fuels and this is a depletion of foreign currencies," Mr Murad said. "Look at the street outside and count the number of lit bulbs," Mr Bushnaq exclaimed indignantly. It was about 9:00 PM in the Shmeisani business district and he was right: It looked like day-time. "Three people are inside the offices across the street and all their lights beamed," he charged.
EMS blames the media for much of the energy-illiteracy evident among Jordanians. "The local media follows the obvious news in politics and trade and looks the other way when the subject does not have immediate dynamism." Mr Bushnaq told *The Star*.
According to Mr Murad, Jordan has an energy policy but no legislation to implement it or enforce it. "Jordan has a water problem and the policy has clearly stated that we should conserve water," Mr Murad added. "There is no intensive program, as there is elsewhere, to deal with the problem. The solution is on the individual level." The price-deterrent policy for excessive water and electrical consumption does not work well. "Financial deterrents are a threat to the pocketbook only," Mr Murad argued. "Energy is something people don't see unless it is their line of speciality," added Mr Bushnaq.
Industry people are aware of the problem, but they may not have the time or the experience to deal with the issue, said Mr Bushnaq. EMS does the worrying on their behalf: "We would analyze their energy bills for them and come up with solutions."
But what plans does EMS have for the future? Energy: Its scarcity and its conservation, are on top of the peace agenda. Identifying the EMS role and markets in the infinite field of energy, water and environment conservation may allow EMS great leverage for expansion in the future. In one of their operations, EMS manages a hotel's water and electricity consumption. "For water conservation, we installed a water treatment facility in the hotel and we saved on fuel and electricity."
"For each field we are addressing, we are only addressing five percent of the potential. We can expand by 20 times for each one," said Mr Murad. Expansion is a matter of choice. The future for EMS includes expansion into industrial waste management, recycling, environmental projects and water treatment.
Jordan can target the problem of water with recycling solutions. As in the US where companies are offering home water-recycling systems, Jordanian households can recycle 50 percent of their white water, which is water used for cleaning purposes. A lot of people will not use it, but the problem is psychological. The Jordanian public doesn't accept such methods despite scientific proofs of water purity. ■

JOFICO
A wealth of experience in the insurance business meets today's challenges

☛ A countdown on the life-span of smaller insurance companies may be in order today. Insurance companies are being pushed into forging alliances to survive an increasingly sophisticated business environment. Technological advancements in businesses around the world are prompting a respective changing of the guard within insurance cadres in England as much as in Jordan. The Jordan French Insurance Company (JOFICO) is embarking on a plan to cope with these developments. But how will they do it?

"By going through intensive seminars and lectures, JOFICO is hoping to nurture a technically advanced team in order to meet such future challenges," says Ms Dana Nammari, JOFICO insurance underwriter.

The recent industrial expansion in Jordan had to be matched with suitable services. On-going training and retraining is good but JOFICO had to go through complete internal restructuring from mid-1991 to the beginning of 1992 to adapt itself to future changes. The public shareholding company is embarking on a project to automate its operations, and employees are currently going through a rigid hands-on training program to effect total proficiency. Insurance today is based on scientific methodology.

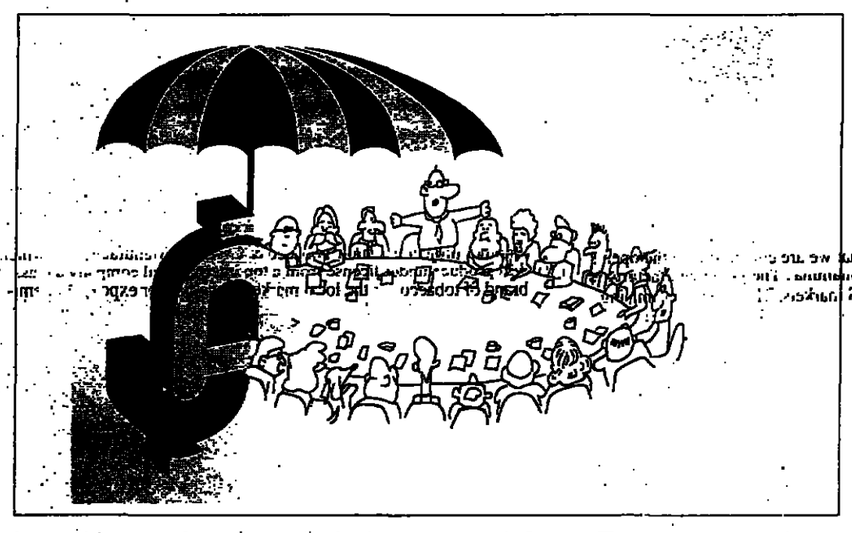


"Insurance is not a wild guess of potential risks involved in industry and business. It is an educated assessment of risk implementing advanced methodology and the science of probabilities," Ms Nammari says. The constant attempts to win over customers like JOFICO's Royal Jordanian (aviation) and Jordan's Armed Forces "attest to JOFICO's unmatched credibility in the local market," she adds.

JOFICO, who won these giant tenders between 1976 and 1978, has maintained them since. "Keeping these accounts was not an easy task and you need to continuously prove your worthiness to the client. A good insurance business needs a wealth of experience to confront the challenges put forth by an ever changing business world." Ms. Nammari says. A government anywhere is the biggest customer for insurance companies. This sector plays a vital role in shaping their way of doing business.

JOFICO's portfolio includes many other companies. The company is part of the group that insures the phosphate, potash and Jordan Petroleum Refinery, among many others.

The credibility of any insurance company is seen through its treaty with international re-insurers, companies that insure insurance companies. Re-insurers are the financial umbrella local companies operate under. If a huge claim, usually worth millions of dollars, is called by one of the clients, local insurers and re-insurers share the damages realized. But international re-insurers pay the lion's share of the claim, diverting the otherwise disastrous claim away from the local insurance company. Such alliances allow companies like JOFICO the leverage to deal with the expected surge of business expected to ensue under peace.



But can any local insurance company join the top international re-insurance companies? There is global competition for the support of re-insurers inviting stiff competition among local companies to acquire them. If the local company is not technically competent, it cannot acquire international support. "Half of JOFICO's strength comes from the good image cultured in the local market through the years of experience gained, but the other half is international support," Ms Nammari emphasized. JOFICO's support comes from very strong international re-insurers "allowing it excellent candidacy to handle big jobs like aviation and industry."

The re-insured also provide their experiences in support of the direct insurer who rely upon their resources for possible risk assessments.

The largest class in the insurance business at JOFICO is Marine Cargo Insurance. Property insurance which includes factories and buildings (stationary items) follows marine insurance in regards to the proportion of business. Factories depend on the supply of raw materials to operate and supply markets. Insuring marine cargo insures availability of raw materials for industry. If this stops, the stopped factories claim their damages because of employees' salaries and other financial commitments. Such is the link that gives the insurance business its supreme vitality in the marketplace. It acts simply as a buffer against possible economic collapses. The insurance business in the industrial world is ever expanding and it is expected that the Middle East region will witness a similar trend. Peace will bring an expanded industrial base and trade.

The above talk may seem like good public relations to a company like JOFICO. But why should anyone support insurance when it seems that all insurance does is get paid for hedging against the future?

The insurance business is intertwined with the economy in every possible way. The companies' old systems of hedging risk by putting aside assets against potential future risks would freeze some of their available resources. By paying a nominal sum for insurance, capital resources of a firm are set free for improvements within a company such as technological or structural advancements. The insurer worries instead of the insured.

More than just direct utility to the private sector, insurance actually repatriates foreign currencies from international affiliates and increases local money supply.

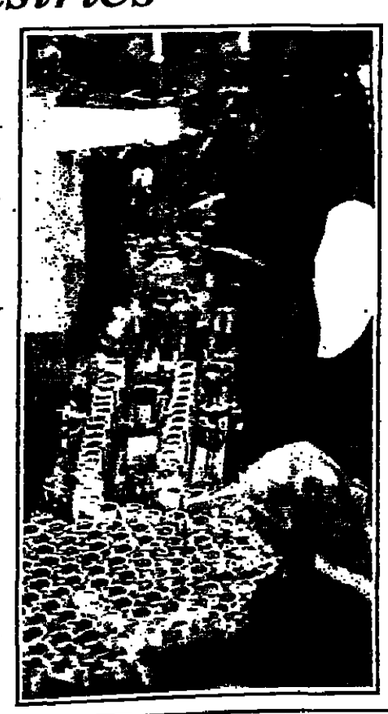
The business of insurance, according to Ms Nammari, also includes departments for researching and developing prevention plans for industry. By enhancing a firm's accident prevention measures, resources can be saved and insurance rates can be capped at acceptable limits. Insurance companies advise governments on these issues: "The first fire brigade in England was a private venture operated by an English insurance company," Ms Nammari said. ■

Profile
Dina Khayyat: Women take the lead in local industries

☛ When Ms Dina Khayyat graduated from George Washington University in 1985, Mr Jack Khayyat's (her father's), Middle East Agricultural & Trading Company (MEATCO), had already mushroomed into one of Jordan's biggest food production businesses. At one point in 1976, Mr Khayyat was called Jordan's poultry king by the *Near East Business* publication. Khayyat's enterprises included hatcheries, animal feed factories, and poultry farms supplying 50 percent of Jordan's needs. But that wasn't all: His enterprises included other various interests that ranged from restaurants to produce farms.

Armed with a Bachelor's degree in marketing and management administration, Ms Khayyat "joined the forces of my father's business." She started her career journey in the packaging factory in D'lail, Jordan, "to get a hand-on experience of what was really happening in the business."

But according to Ms Khayyat, her trip into industry was not paved with roses. "I had to struggle to find my own way in the business and to command the respect of those who had the seniority edge over me." Such respect is born difficult and requires better than the father-daughter link to the business. "Although I tried hard to project the image that I was just another employee, they still called me '*bint el mua'lim*' (boss's daughter) for a long time before proving that I had worthy qualities," she adds. "I had some clashes with the employees to force my will over their's until I won."



"My father was testing me most of the time and I must have blew it up many times before I convinced him that I was qualified for the job," Ms Khayyat admitted. Her major problem with "men in the company was to get them moving on her delegations." After her valuable experience at the factory, she joined the management offices in Amman.

Today, Ms Khayyat is leading the way. Her ambitions for expanding Meatco's business include penetration of markets in the Gulf and Europe. Before the beginning of the 1980s Meatco was exporting to Iraq. "Now our foods are considered a luxury in Baghdad, they worry about essentials like milk and flour; we lost that market after the Gulf War."

Along with her sister Muna, who handles the export department at Meatco, the Omani market has been penetrated and the US market is already a four-year-old one. "Under peace we hope we'd be able to sell in the Palestinian market and eventually the Israeli market should that have a worthy demand."

Meatco has introduced two new items to its product line: Mixed vegetables, broad beans and chick peas. A new machine was bought to produce the mixed vegetables.

An interesting addition to the factory is the manufacturing of a sterilizing machine which took place in Jordan. "We contracted a local manufacturer," Ms Khayyat said with pride.

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Honoring a voice of dissent

By Daya Kishan Thussu

Vandana Shiva

VANDANA SHIVA is an internationally respected writer and activist known for her work on feminist theory and environmental issues. She is also active in grassroots movements in India. In recognition of her work, she has been honored with the 1993 Right Livelihood Award, (commonly known as the Alternative Nobel Prize) which she is due to receive today, Thursday, in Stockholm, Sweden.

Shiva has won admirers the world over and earned many powerful enemies.

Among rural workers, ecologists and officials she has emerged as one of the most articulate voices of concern for mother earth. Her trenchant criticism of the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has angered business leaders.

For her work she has been honored with the 1993 Right Livelihood Award, sharing the $20.000 with four other women's groups.

The award was introduced in 1980 to honor and support work which challenged world problems such as the arms race, poverty, environmental destruction and social justice. Since then 50 people and projects have received it.

Shiva was born in 1952 and studied to become a nuclear physicist. When her doctor sister pointed out how the nuclear industry endangered health she had a change of heart and moved into theoretical physics, completing her PhD in the Philosophy of Science in 1978.

After four years at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, she set up a research foundation in Dehradun in northern India, an informal network of researchers working with rural activists.

These have included the *Chipko* movement to stop deforestation in the Himalayan foothills. The movement's name arises from the women's tactic of hugging trees to protect them from the axe.

The *Chipko* movement was an inspiration for Shiva's work, together with the hills and forests where she grew up. She has learned more from uneducated farmers, she says, than city-based intellectuals who are "not rooted" in the environment.

Her first book, *Staying Alive—Women, Ecology and Development*, published four years ago, established her as a serious critic of the development model adopted by the Third World.

She was critical of the so-called Green Revolution in the 1960s and its effect on the environment and women. A major concern for her now is the impact of the "second" Green Revolution using biotechnology and genetic engineering in agriculture.

By 1990 Shiva's work had become so well-known she was featured as one of India's top ten women in a leading weekly magazine.

The following year she co-chaired the World Congress on Women and Environment. She has also coordinated a network of environmental activists from South Asia for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and is advising a South Asian citizens' group on environment issues. She is also ecology adviser to the Third World Network and the Asia Pacific People's Environment Network.

Coinciding with news of her award, she was in London to promote her new book, *Ecofeminism*, co-authored with German sociologist Maria Mies.

The concept of Ecofeminism, "a new term for an ancient wisdom," grew out of women's ecological and peace movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Ecofeminism rejects, according to the authors, the "capitalist patriarchal world system" which is based on the "colonization of women, of 'foreign' peoples and their lands; and of nature, which it is gradually destroying."

This criticism covers the whole basis of Western forms of knowledge, especially science which has a distorted view of nature, used to justify capitalism and colonialism. Shiva claims that for Francis Bacon, the father of modern science, nature was "no longer Mother Nature, but a female nature to be conquered by an aggressive masculine mind."

She says there have been three phases of colonialism, all of which have been justified as the superior white man's burden: first the mission was to "civilize," then to "develop" and now to "protect" the Third World environment. All have in practice meant depriving non-white people of their rights and resources.

The World Bank's Tropical Action Plan, the Climate Convention, the Montreal Protocol and the Earth Summit are all seen by the Third World as new ways of dispossessing the poor to "save" the forests, atmosphere and shared natural resources, not for their own people but for exploitation by the powerful North.

Shiva points out that there is a close connection between women and the environment. Most small and subsistence farmers in the Third World are women. For thousands of years they have lived in harmony with their environment, sowing seed and harvesting food. Now this is under threat by the global institutions like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that are seeking to have a "free trade" in agriculture.

Shiva claims that this freedom is for transnational corporations (TNCs) "to invest, produce and trade in agricultural commodities without restriction, regulation or responsibility."

Along with this is the threat to biodiversity, the attempt by GATT to allow agribusiness to patent seeds for farming. Seed corporations deliberately breed hybrid plants that cannot give rise to future generations so that farmers are forced to buy new seed every year.

Shiva claims that this is "a form of piracy", robbing the shared heritage of Third World farmers who have saved and used seed over millenia.

This is happening at a time when under the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programs, poor countries are being forced to open up their economies to TNCs.

She calls the World Bank a "Janus-faced" creature which claims to promote development but at the same time is making it easy for transnational companies to take control of the developing world.

Unlike Third World leaders, who have to be worried about the "bullet or ballot" if they go too far, the World Bank is accountable to no one.

The global lenders have done their best to erode the sovereignty of Third World states through the demands of structural adjustment. She argues that the state has become a provider and protector not of its people but the TNCs.

The now fashionable concept of sustainable development is not compatible, she says, with the aping of Northern lifestyles by the South.

Sixty years ago, when asked by a British journalist whether he would like India to have the same standard of living as Britain, Mahatma Gandhi replied: "To have its standard of living, a tiny country like Britain had to exploit half the globe. How many globes will India need to exploit to have the same standard of living?"

Despite the alarm about losing control to the TNCs, Shiva says the Third World has a good deal of creative energy which needs to be tapped. She is optimistic about the future, with ever-growing grassroots groups.

With increasing education, especially among women, she says, things will look up and GATT/World Bank/IMF hegemony will end. Already, she says, signs of economic and moral decline in the West, which controls these institutions, are there for all to see. ■

Daya Kishan Thussu is Associate Editor of Gemini News Service. He has a PhD in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and teaches a course of Third World Development at Britain's Open University.He is co-author of *Contra-Flow in Global News*.

Miami, Florida:

Where youth crime is on the increase

By Mohamed Hamaludin

DRY BUT startling statistics in a United Nations report in faraway London are confirming, in the eyes of some observers, that lives of many of America's poor children are horror stories.

A United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, released late September, says American children are worse off today than they were in 1970. For the United States, UNICEF said in its annual *The Progress of Nations* report, infant mortality is 11 per 1,000, which puts it 19th among industrialized nations. For African-American babies, however, the rate is 18 per 1000—twice that of the whites.

The report says that conditions for American children have deteriorated in the past three decades because more of them are growing up without fathers and more mothers have to work. One in four American children is raised by their mother alone, the report says, compared with one in 10 in 1960.

The US government and law enforcement authorities are grappling with a particularly disturbing aspect of the problem: growing numbers of violent offences by young children.

In Florida, for instance, police have recently arrested children as young as 13 and 15 in connection with robberies, violent assaults and even murder.

In Miami, a 13-year-old who bought pizza for homeless people living under an expressway, was angered when one homeless man took two slices instead of one. They boy went home, returned with a gun and then shot and killed him. A grand jury later ruled that the child should be tried as an adult.

In a small town upstate, robbers shot and killed a British tourist and wounded his companion, at a highway rest stop. In the ensuing police investigation, over 50 African-American children were rounded up for questioning. Accused of racial harassment, the authorities defended themselves saying that all had long criminal records.

Indeed, the prime suspect in the case, according to some reports, is a 13-year-old whose police record lists more than 50 offences.

In the Fort Lauderdale area police arrested one boy for car theft who had a record of over 55 incidents. Another, aged 13, was arrested for armed robbery (using a knife)—his 18th such arrest.

The attacks are particularly vicious, whether in Miami or elsewhere. In one robbery in another state, captured on a store television monitor, young men were seen robbing a jewelry store and then, as they were leaving, turning back and shooting the owner.

In one case in Miami, police arrested three teenagers for murder committed during a store robbery. The officers later reported that the boys showed no remorse whatsoever and merely asked for a packet of candy and a soft drink while being questioned.

The killing of the tourist, the ninth in Florida in the past year, followed two other incidents in which foreign visitors were killed. In one case a German woman who lost her way was robbed and beaten and then run over as she lay injured on the ground.

Another German tourist was shot and killed on a Miami expressway apparently during a robbery attempt. In both cases, police arrested and charged people in their late-teens or early twenties.

Tourists in particular are targeted because of the cash and valuables they usually carry, which has the Florida state officials worried about the billions of dollars of tourism revenue the state relies upon.

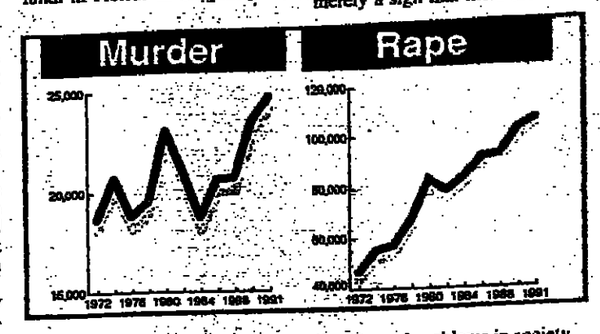
Some members of Congress have proposed a law which would make attacks on tourists a federal crime requiring much harsher penalties than at present.

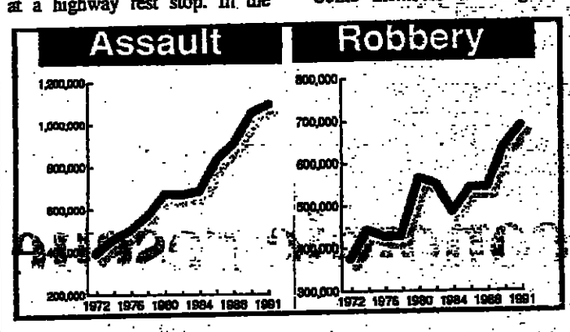
With the considerable television coverage given to crime in the area, many residents have responded by arming themselves. In a country where just about anyone can obtain a gun legally, gun sales have begun to soar, up 20 per cent this year already over the whole of last year. In just the Miami area, there are now 28,300 registered—not to mention the thousands more who have guns that are not registered.

Florida is considering laws against children possessing firearms, which already exist in 18 other states. No one knows how effective such laws would be, but law enforcement proponents generally feel that the criminal justice system is too lenient with criminals, including juveniles.

And at a time when capital punishment is becoming less popular around the world, the Congress is considering a law that would extend the number of crimes that would be punishable by death.

Others, including many of Florida's African-American elected officials, however, argue that crime is not the main issue, but merely a sign that there are more deep-seated problems in society.





Said Dade County Commission Chairman Arthur E Teele Jr: "Crime is a symptom of the problem, which I would suggest education, family values, lack of discipline and lack of self-esteem are part of."

"It's learned behavior," says white Juvenile Court Judge, Tom Petersen. "The tragedy is the ghetto. The tragedy is the places where kids learn the behavior."

State Representative James Hargrett said the ghettos resemble "a little Somalia, with people running around in the street with guns—and people afraid to report the violence for fear of their lives."

"We have packs of stray animals that are running around growing themselves up without benefit of families," said Hargrett, unknowingly reflecting the UNICEF report's findings.

The public, however, lacking constructive responses to the problem, expose the most titillating of the horror stories on a wide range of popular television interview shows. On the nationally syndicated "Donahue" show recently, a 15-year-old girl, already with a two-year-old daughter of her own, was interviewed. Her claim to fame was that, by her own admission, she had once killed another women and got away with it, along with several other stabbings and offenses.

A day later, the newspapers reported that it had all been a hoax and that the police had no information of any such unsolved murders.

Her story is a terrible indictment of the conditions in which she and others like her have to grow up, in the world's so-called richest country. It also demonstrates how America is holding these problems up as oddities to be displayed in public, rather than recognizing just how deeply it is failing its children. ■

Mohammed Hamaludin is Managing Editor of *Miami Times*.

Women and Islam in Central Asia:

A nascent women's movement taking shape

By Cassandra Balchin

IN THE race to condemn the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in former Soviet Central Asia, outsiders are in danger of sidelining enlightened Islamic traditions indigenous to the area and popular among women.

The Sufi movement, which includes some of Islam's most humanitarian and anti-establishment currents, was largely responsible for the spread of Islam in Central Asia. The Young Muslim Women of Kazakhstan argue that Sufi followers could be used to counter more rigid traditions beating aggressively promoted in the region.

Kazakh academic A Jakina told a conference of Central Asian women just held in Alma Ata: "Our main task is to teach young women to be active in society. We believe the cover of religion will be a great help, especially in the rural areas."

The women of Kazakhstan seek to claim their own interpretation of Islam: "We have to raise Islam to a new level. Muslim women are in a particularly good position to do this."

There are already indications that the Central Asian governments are wary of militant Islam. In September Islam Karimov told international financiers: "We shall not allow Uzbekistan to follow an Islamic ideology."

Central Asian women are not convinced. Tashkent architect Marfua Tokhtakhodzhaeva recalls: "A member of our Parliament declared that women should not be allowed to wear trousers or drive a car. There was no official condemnation."

Promotion of Islam by foreign organizations is already to be seen everywhere. Stickers bearing the Arabic *Kalima* (Muslim creed) and published by a Bangladeshi organization are found in many Tashkent elevators. Currency declaration forms issued at the Tashkent airport came with the compliments of Jamiat Taleem-ul-Quran International, Karachi, Pakistan.

The form of Islam being promoted may be alien to Central Asia. A poster on sale bore a stylized drawing of the *Ka'aba* (sacred building) in Mecca, the *Kalima* in Arabic and a distinctly South Asian beauty complete with gold nose ring, hands open in prayer.

The region's economic and social instability offer fertile ground for religious fundamentalism: born-again Christians were found among ethnic Russian women at the Alma Ata conference.

Said Marfua: "Some blame the Soviet system for the problems facing women today and conclude that there should be a return to the old ways. These people don't want women to take part in society."

As the people try to redefine their national identities, the linkages between custom, religion and ethnicity are being confused. Many at the conference used the terms interchangeably.

This flirtation with subjects taboo under socialism is open to exploitation by outside forces. Algerian Anissa Helie warned: They don't realize how religion can be used as a political tool of control."

In trying to deal with unemployment and upheaval caused by social services cutbacks the Central Asian governments are already pursuing pro-nationalist policies.

Kazakhstan has launched a Program of Action to raise the birthrate while Uzbekistan has passed legislation extending maternity leave to three years and providing pensions rights to women with more than four children.

The official concern for women voiced at the conference was confined to women in the family and conveniently meshed with the fundamentalist agenda for women. Although as a formal religion Islam held little sway in Soviet Central Asia, certain customary practices closely identified with the religion are still to be found.

"It is absolutely obligatory to have a *mullah* at one's marriage," noted Delora Ismadiyarova, from Uzbekistan's Gulistan region.

The Soviet Union was one of the few countries with a significant Muslim population to abolish polygamy outright. Yet, says Marfua, "We each know women in villages—even in towns—who are in polygamous marriages. They are just covered up by fake divorces."

Few have illusions about the position of women in pre-revolution era women novelists such as M Dulatova, who wrote that Kazakhs cannot be civilized until their women are free, remain popular today. There are equally few illusions about socialism's ability to solve all women's problems.

Central Asian women trace their emergence from seclusion and purdah to the late-1920s and 1930s when legislation established principles of legal equality. "Thereafter our problems were not supposed to exist," sardonically commented one speaker.

As these women seek a path ahead a women's movement is clearly on the agenda. Marfua reported on her survey of 200 women in the region: "Most women say it's necessary to organize to protect and promote their rights and that all women should be equal partners in such a movement. Only 17 percent of women wanted a return to the old ways."

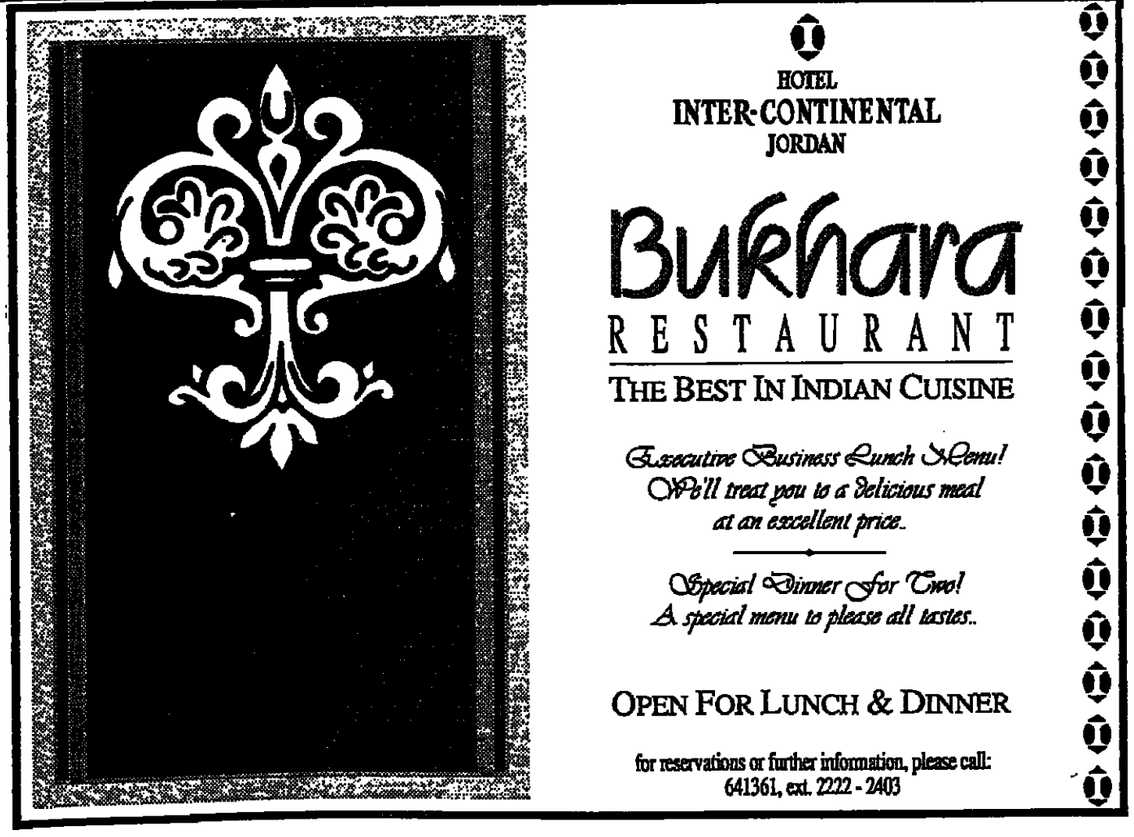
The issue remains: What shape will such a movement take and how it will tackle the growing question of religion? "If they don't confront this issue it will be decided for them and then they will be stuck," predicted Anissa.

Like those in many other countries where religion dominates political discourse, Central Asian women face the danger of a singular definition of Islam—and one unlikely to operate in their favor.

Central Asian Islam is far from monolithic. Turkic, Iranian and Arabic influences provide a cultural context which reflects the diversity of the Muslim world outside Central Asia. In some areas dowry practice dominates while in others bride-price is more common with couples all believing their practice is "Islamic."

Politicians and governments in Central Asia and those abroad seeking advantage in what is seen as a land of economic and political opportunity, are increasingly focusing the debate on Islam. Central Asian women make sure their voice, and their vision of Islam, is heard. ■

Cassandra Balchin was born and educated in Britain but now lives in Pakistan.



The environment:

Warning bell sounds for world's oceans

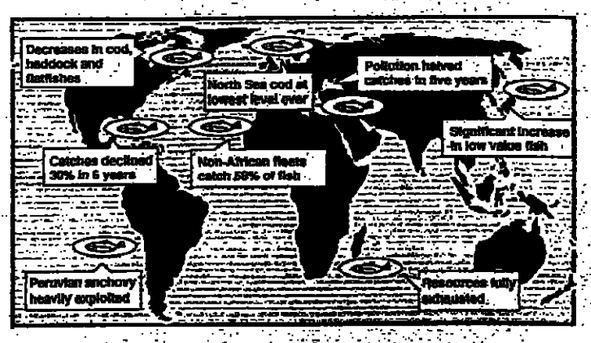
By Denise Searle

LONDON—The oceans are "showing alarming signs of harm" and this could cause wide-ranging damage to the global environment, according to a new study by the Worldwatch Institute.

The Washington-based organization says the decline is caused largely by over-fishing, pollution, transport of "exotic" species in ballast water of big ships, construction of dams which reduce freshwater flows, and coastal structures which alter the impact of tides and currents. A key sign of these problems is the reduction in fish catches, which are a major source of animal protein, particularly in many Third World countries.

"It's now believed that all 17 of the world's major fishing areas have been fished beyond their limits to replenish," says the institute. "Nine of these fisheries are in serious decline."

"Current government polices continue to support over-fishing, and international laws do not adequately protect coastal ecosystems, which not only feed fish but have become the new frontier of medical research."



Declining fish stocks highlight ocean problems. (Data supplied by UN FAO)

The report, by staff member Peter Weber, cites United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) figures which indicate that the annual world catch is unlikely to reach and maintain the projected 100 million tons unless stocks are better managed.

The FAO largely agrees with Worldwatch's conclusions, but emphasizes that the decline in quality of fish stocks is as important as the drop in volume. High value species such as cod and haddock are becoming rare and are being replaced by lower value and less stable varieties such as squid and pollack, explained Chris Newton, chief of the FAO's fishery information service.

"Of the total marine catch in 1991, 81.1 million tons, or 25%, came from five species: Alaska Pollack, South American Pilchard, Peruvian Anchovy, Chilean Jack Mackeral, Japanese Pilchard," he said. And he is concerned about this increasing reliance on a small number of species with a variable catch.

The Worldwatch report points out that Third World countries are exporting an increasing percentage of their fish to gain the hard currency needed to pay off pressing foreign debts. This leaves less for local people.

"Increasing poverty, in turn, drives the fishing problem into an even more vicious circle," says Weber. "As fish become more scarce, more fishers turn to destructive practices such as fishing with poisons or dynamite." ■

Denise Searle is a journalist based in London.

هكذا في الأصل

Russia

Yeltsin lobbies voters hard for his constitution

By Margaret Shapiro

MOSCOW—The proposed constitution that Russian President Boris Yeltsin unveiled last month has been so heavily criticized by reformers and conservatives alike that it may not win approval in a nationwide referendum on 12 December experts say.

A defeat for the constitution would not only hurt Yeltsin's image, since the document was crafted by him and substantially increases his powers, but also could reignite the struggle for political supremacy that led to the bloody confrontation between Yeltsin and hard-line lawmakers on 3-4 October.

Yeltsin's constitutional proposal, broadly based on a US presidential model, has been criticized for making the president too powerful and the legislature too weak, for curbing the power of regional governments and for being too complicated. It provides many human-rights protections, guarantees the right to own land and eliminates the last legal vestiges of the Soviet system.

No one discounts the possibility that Yeltsin will be able to persuade voters over the coming days to back his constitution, given the Russian tendency to support the country's leaders. But the prospect of a politically damaging outcome is clearly worrying Yeltsin and his associates.

In the last week, a commission has been set up to lobby for and disseminate Yeltsin's draft, regional bosses appointed by Yeltsin have been ordered to push hard for a yes vote and the ostensibly impartial chairman of the state election commission, whom Yeltsin appointed, urged Russians to "make the right choice in favor" of the constitution.

Yeltsin recently summoned leaders of 13 parties running in parliamentary elections also scheduled for 12 December and threatened to rescind their free television time if they continued to attack his proposal. "Don't touch the constitution," he warned. Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko, a key Yeltsin political aide, tried to have several parties tossed off the ballot for the same sin.

Both threats produced a storm of protest, and both were dropped.

But they added to a perception that Yeltsin was becoming too autocratic, even a little desperate, in the lead-up to the referendum and parliamentary election.

"The current leaders are losing even the elementary notion of democracy," fumed economist Grigory Yavlinsky, head of one of the leading pro-reform parties that has spoken out against the adoption of the constitution and has called for the new parliament to rewrite it.

Similar ideas have been put forward by members of Yeltsin's own team, who worry that the criticism has turned the constitutional proposal into damaged goods. Without a huge endorsement by the electorate, Yeltsin's constitution will be as suspect as the old Soviet document he tore up in September.

"The next president and the next government will then easily be able to say that this constitution is illegitimate because it was pushed through and only accepted by a minority of the Russian people," said political consultant Denis Dragounski. "So then we will need to have a new one again."

Under the election law set in place by Yeltsin after he disbanded the old parliament on 21 September and ordered new elections, the constitution will be approved if 50 percent of the electorate comes to the polls and a simple majority then votes in favor of it. That means Yeltsin can win if only 25 percent of Russia's 107 million voters, plus one, vote for the draft.

This does not sound like a lot of votes, and indeed the threshold was twice as high under the now discarded Soviet era election law. That required 50 percent of eligible voters not just to come to the polls but actually to vote "yes" for any constitutional change to be approved. Few here dispute that Yeltsin's constitution would be defeated under such stringent conditions.

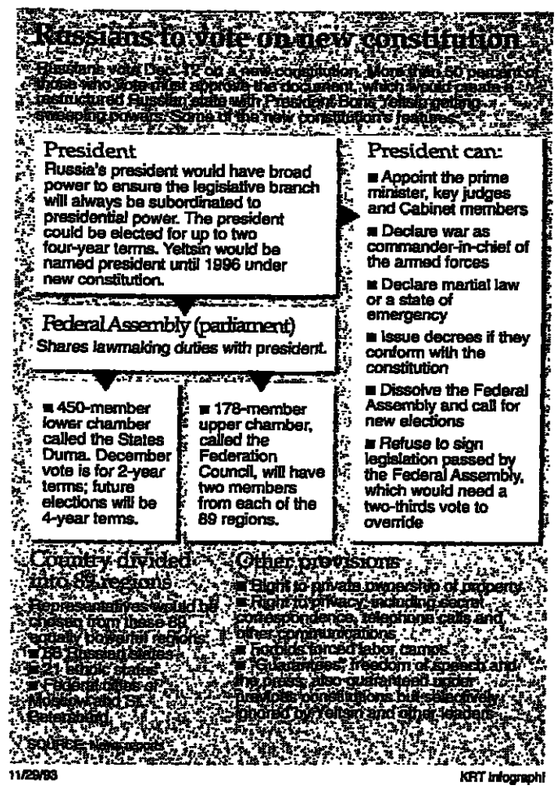
But even the new, lower threshold is worrisome for Yeltsin. Many of his backers acknowledge that it is quite possible that less than 50 percent of the electorate will bother to vote in the referendum, leaving Russia without a constitution.

A new parliament will be elected regardless, but there would be no law clearly defining the responsibilities of the branches of government, thus setting the stage for a power struggle. As the Russian daily *Izvestia* reported Friday, "if the referendum fails, the now-traditional political tug of war between the two branches of power will resume."

Some Yeltsin aides are hoping to use this ominous scenario to persuade people to vote "yes" even if they are not wild about some of the constitution's provisions. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Yeltsin: New deal?



Alessandra Mussolini: Defeated

Italy

Left sees gains in election but Right fights back

By William D Montalbano

ROME—A swelling national vote of protest turned Italy sharply to the left last Sunday, delivering Rome and four other major cities to mayoral candidates supported by the former Communist Party.

The voter disgust that decimated centrist ruling parties and rejected right-wing successors is a weather vane for national elections next year. Expected to recast the foundation of Italian politics and government after nearly half a century, they may bring former Communists to power for the first time.

Mounting returns early Monday from 8.3 million voters in 129 cities echoed exit polls that showed broad gains for the former Communists, including a clean sweep in the five most closely watched races.

Leftist alliances defeated neofascists in Rome and Naples, where Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, was defeated by an official of the former Communist Party, now called the Party of the Democratic Left.

In Venice and Genoa, leftist candidates beat off challengers of the federalist Northern League, and in Trieste, an independent supported by leftist parties defeated a right-wing former mayor.

"Left Triumphs," shouted a banner headline in Monday's edition of *Corriere della Serra*, dean of the Italian press. "Italy of the Red Mayors," lamented the conservative *Il Giornale* as horn-blowing cavalcades of jubilant leftists paraded through downtown Rome and other major cities early Monday.

A raging 21-month corruption scandal that has implicated more than 3,000 politicians, business leaders and government officials destroyed the credibility of the centrist Christian Democrats and middle of-the-road allies that have dominated Italian politics since World War II.

Centrist candidates lost heavily in first-round mayoral voting two weeks ago, leaving right and left to battle in Sunday's runoff in cities where no candidate won a majority.

"The people have understood that there weren't two extremes—just one extreme of the right," said Achille Occhetto, who led the former Communists to a new name and newly proclaimed social democracy. Occhetto called the election "a historic change which opens the road to a true political alternative in national elections."

Francesco Rutelli, a 39-year-old part-time journalist who drives a motorbike and drew most of his votes from the former Communists, is the first Green mayor in the 2,700-year history of Rome. His chanting, dancing, singing supporters overflowed Rome's Piazza Campidoglio deep into the night.

"It is a great joy. The capital is in the hands of progressive forces," Rutelli said as returns showed him victorious over Gianfranco Fini, national leader of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, by about 54 percent to 46 percent.

"It's a numeric defeat but a political victory. The right has in fact triumphed. Its impact will be felt in national elections," said Fini, whose neo-fascists won just 5.4 percent in the last national vote in 1992.

In Naples, 46-year-old Antonio Bassolino called his victory over the 30-year-old Mussolini "a dream come true." Bassolino had about 54 percent to 46 percent for the former actress and member of Parliament, according to vote projections.

"The left has won, but they are the party of the old system. If they fail to achieve anything in four years they'll have to answer for it," said Mussolini, who nostalgically invoked the memory of her grandfather in campaign stops. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Japan's government assembles economic rescue package

By David Holley

TOKYO—Prodded into action by plunging stock values, Japan's reformist coalition government scrambled last week to put together an economic rescue package capable of pulling the country out of recession.

The government has immense ability to intervene in the stock market and the economy by propping up share prices with public funds or pumping up overall economic activity through fiscal stimulus.

But a key commitment of the shaky seven-party ruling coalition is to push deregulation and restructuring, so as to promote freer play for market forces, better relations with trading partners and, ultimately, greater efficiency.

The government still hopes to spark the economy and stem the stock market slide using measures in keeping with these goals. How successfully prime minister Morihiro Hosokawa copes with this challenge will determine how quickly Japan escapes its worst recession since the years shortly after World War II.

That in turn will affect Japan's appetite for foreign goods—a key concern of the Clinton administration, as it seeks to create more American jobs through expanded exports. The administration for months has urged Tokyo to take more aggressive steps to promote economic growth.

The coalition headed by Mr Hosokawa, which came to power in August, wanted to focus first on political reform measures aimed at attacking the country's endemic political corruption.

But economic issues have forced their way to the forefront, eclipsing the political reform drive. Soon after taking office, Hosokawa said he would "take political responsibility"—meaning resign or call new elections—if he failed to meet a self-imposed end-of-year deadline for enactment of political reform.

It now seems likely he will miss the deadline but will hang on to his post, at least into January.

But this looming failure to win the promised quick success on political reform contributes to overall uncertainty about the government's stability, including its ability to carry out appropriate economic policies.

"They are now flustered, and in a very serious way are losing confidence in themselves," Mr Minoru Morita, a prominent political commentator, said in describing the current mood of the Hosokawa Cabinet.

Japan's current recession was to a large degree touched off by the government itself, which took steps in 1988 and 1989 to sharply boost interest rates and to impose heavy taxes on profits from speculative real estate deals. The government also cut back on deficit spending. These measures succeeded in cooling off the overheated "bubble economy" of the late 1980s, but the downturn soon began to feed on itself.

The government persisted in seeking to balance its operating budget by raising taxes and controlling expenditures, bringing the annual deficit down to zero by 1991. Since then, the powerful bureaucrats at the Ministry of Finance have resisted all efforts to prime the economy through new deficit spending.

Early this year, most analysts believed the economy would soon begin a modest recovery. But then the value of the yen surged, hitting exports hard. This left Japan unable to escape its economic difficulties through boosting exports, a key method in previous recessions. An exceptionally cool summer, which hurt agricultural production, adding to the difficulties.

After two years of recession and a recent wave of gloomy economic statistics, plunging share prices early last week forced the government to give up its attempt to maintain a fully hands-off approach to the stock market and a long-term approach to economic issues.

The market recovered by the end of the week with the Tokyo Stock Exchanges Nikkei 225 average closing Friday up at 17,459 1/3.

The outlines of a new economic stimulus package are expected to be released as early as Tuesday. Due for inclusion are an income tax cut, relaxation of rules on real estate transactions and steps to support the stock market.

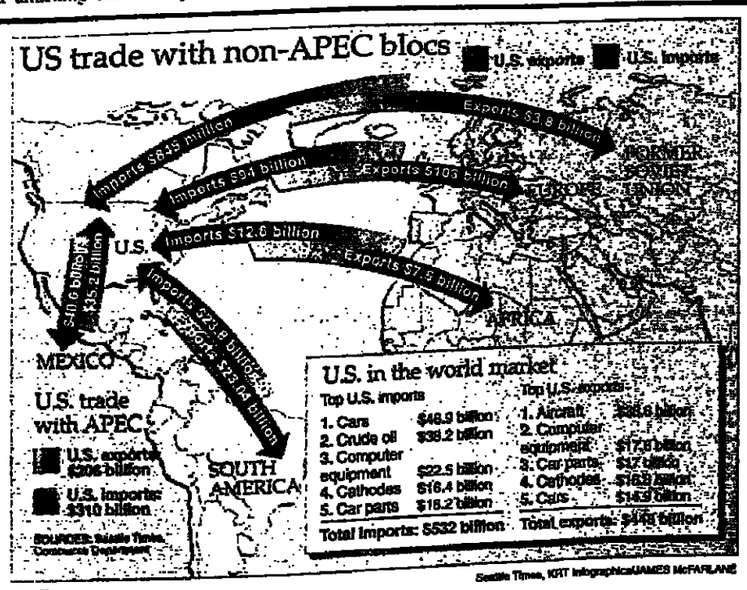
Some of what the government appears to be contemplating fits its proclaimed goal of deregulation. Other aspects—such as measures to allow speculators to keep greater profits from land sales—seem to be more of a return to policies that contributed to the late-1980s speculative boom.

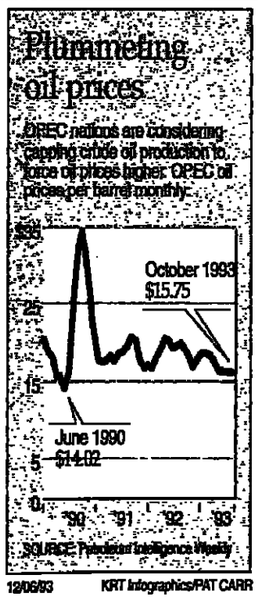
The Hosokawa government faces a complex set of interlocking policy problems, and it remains unclear whether it can find a way out: the political reform package has cleared the lower house of parliament but faces difficulties in the upper house, primarily due to opposition from some Socialist members of the ruling coalition.

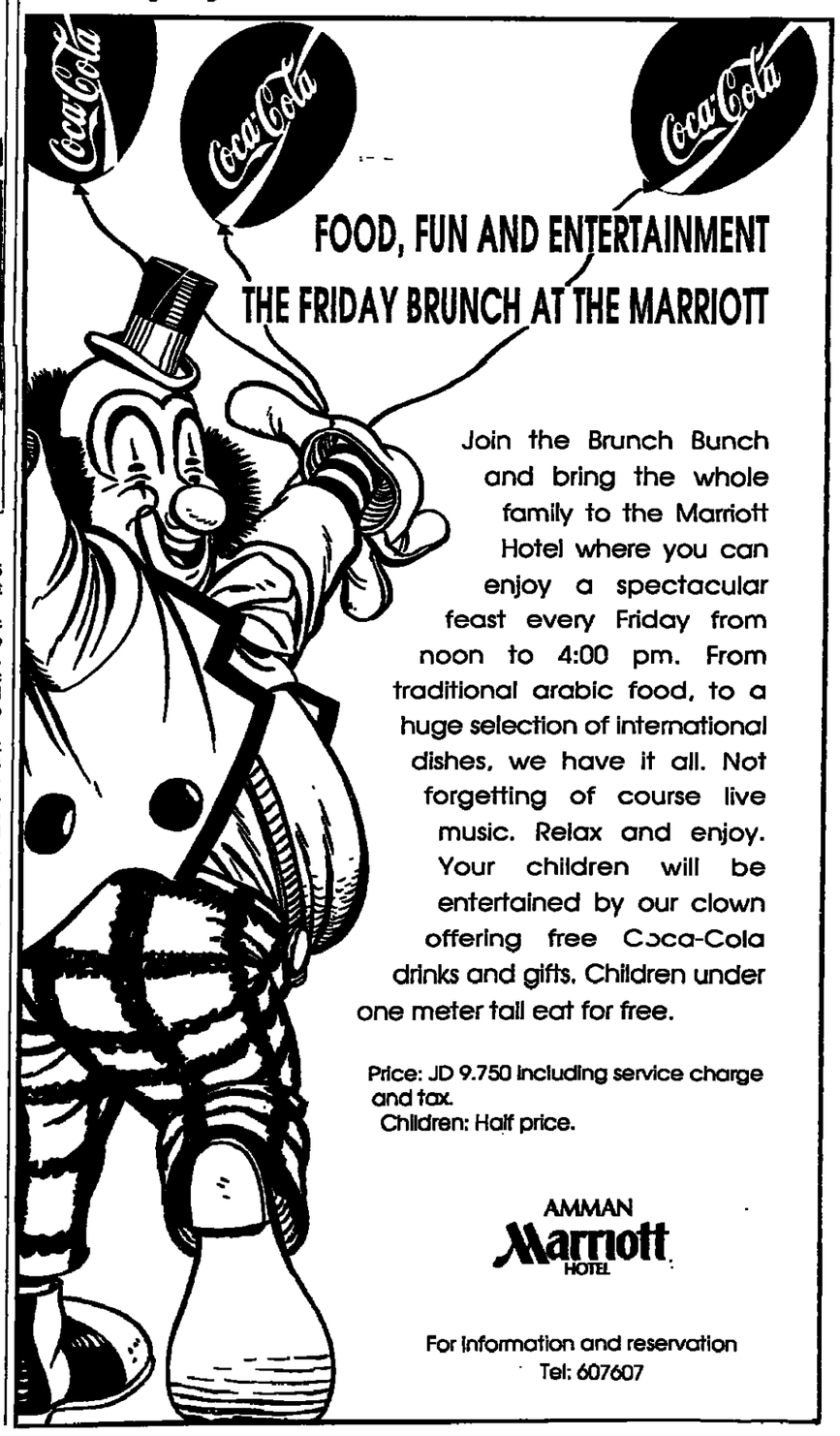
The government wants to use income tax cuts to boost the economy. But it is also determined to eventually impose a consumption tax increase. This is because officials believe that as Japan's population ages, it is essential to shift part of the tax burden from salaried employees to retirees with enough money to sustain high expenditures. This long-term goal conflicts with the short-term need for fiscal stimulus. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

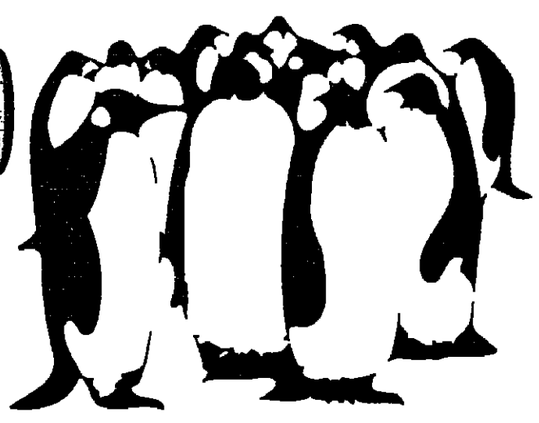
Looking for ways to spark the Japanese economy







AROUND TOWN



InterContinental holds annual employees party

● Hotel InterContinental Jordan recently held its annual employees party which included various events 'pumped' by singer Majedah, dancer Nagham and accompanied by the Five Fingers band. A prize drawing and the handing out of honorary medals to distinguished employees were also part of the evening.

Mr Alfaro Ray, assistant general manager, gave a speech thanking all employees for their efforts in making Hotel InterContinental Jordan the head of the pack. He also encouraged them to keep up the good work in providing the best services to the residents of the hotel.

Mahmoud Taha:

A turnaround in the function of art

Adnan Yahya and Mahmoud Al Abed
Special to The Star

AS AN artist, **Mahmoud Taha** has always been a phenomenon throughout the evolution of Jordan's art movement. For 30 years, he has been dedicated to the development of Arab pottery so it can exceed the limits of locality. His art does not serve an exclusively aesthetic approach, but a humanitarian one as well whereby he expresses humane issues. It is necessary to say that he was one of the first artists who devoted his art to human causes.

From the very start, Taha, who was expatriated and thus suffered and felt nostalgic, saw in pottery the best means to depict the tragedy of the Palestinian people.

On the personal level, those close to Taha realize that he works in accordance with what his feelings dictate. A person like him can be felt in the novels of the French writer **Jean Rodout**. A resemblance can also be drawn between him and the character of Afna in **Jabra Ibrahim Jabra**'s novel *The Daily Life of Sarab Afana* or Abdallah Al Barri in **Waleed Seif**'s *In Search for Abdalla Al Barri*. It's interesting to know that Mahmoud Taha has depicted this character in his ceramics, modelling him in one turquoise mass very much matching the tranquil glorious surroundings of the figure.

Taha's works are characterized by three things: First, he employs his art in the service of human issues. Secondly, he's fully aware of himself as a human as well as an artist; and finally he persistently searches for his own understanding of history. Taha looks at Abdullah Al Barri as a precious discovery, so he portrays him in a new light and form: a veiled face with lineaments and a look in the eyes showing firmness, determination and patience.

This version of Abdullah Al Barri points out not only the artist's patriotic and human attitudes, but also shows how much mastery he has over his media both in coloring and formation.

Mahmoud Taha has succeeded in establishing his own line and in introducing new terminology to the art of ceramics. Many critics think that, in an obvious analogy with the French novelist **Michael Botour**, he has made a turnover in the march of his own field of creation. In other words, he has diverted the function of his art from purely aesthetic and pragmatic (ie, to use created pieces of pottery as objects of beauty, precious household items or decorative pieces), to become a medium for expressing thought and fulfilling commitment to national and human issues. This kind of turnover is best described by the late artist and critic **Rabah Al Sghayyar** when he wrote "with his art being his tool, Taha takes part in the battle of life aiming at reaching its meaningful aspects."

Through his exhibitions, Taha showed absolute freedom in shaping out his figures. In a certain show, it was the circle that dominated the exhibited works; in another, it was the shape of the globe. He sometimes vacuumed the mass of a rectangle or a square, which represented the windows as a symbol of insight into the tragedy and the wound.

He also employed different types of Arabic calligraphy and Islamic ornamentation. Some of his works are covered with verses from the Holy Quran and lines of poetry especially the ones helping to clarify his own ideas. One of his favorites is **Mahmoud Darwish**'s: "Out of the stone/ we'll establish the State of Lovers."

When applying calligraphy, especially the *Kofi* type, Taha 'gives' his pieces heritage and aesthetic dimension. The Arabic calligraphy is dealt with in its three aspects: the letter, the word and the sentence. It should be emphasized that the artist does not enchain himself within the classical rules of the letter writing; on the contrary, he practices full freedom in this respect.

The artist, who was born in Yazur in 1945, was tutored in calligraphy and pottery by the most celebrated Arab calligrapher **Hashim Al Khattat**. Taha accompanied his teacher until the latter died. He later went to Wales to study in the Cardiff Art College. After graduation he returned to Amman full of dreams and aspirations and started his own studio in Jabal Luweibdeh, replacing a generation of Palestinian artists and writers who occupied the place before him such as **Ismail Shammout** and **Majed Abu Sharar**. No doubt about it: Taha is truly following in those heroes' footsteps.■

Royal Automobile Club organizes motor event

THE ROYAL Automobile Club of Jordan will be organizing the final motor sporting event of 1993 on 17 December. This will be a Rallytour in which all types of cars can compete on equal terms as there are no high speeds and the entire route is on normal asphalt public roads.

The route will be secret until the cars actually start, and the speeds for the different sections of the event will only be issued as each competing team departs from the Club.

The emphasis of the event is on split-second timing and accurate navigation; the top crews are now so expert that they can complete the routes of such events with less than one minute penalty.

The December Rallytour is open to all and is not confined to Club members. All types of vehicles are accepted including vans, pick-ups and the like as long as they are licensed for normal road use.■

Abu Dhabi hosts powerboat championship

THE ENTRY list for the final battle in this year's UIM World F1 Powerboat Grand Prix to be held in the magnificent Abu Dhabi breakwaters includes a staggering 29 drivers; an astonishing feat for the capital which has only just joined the series as a racing venue.

His Highness **Sheikh Sultan bin Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, head of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Court and President of the Abu Dhabi International Marine Sports Club (ADIMSC) has invited Youth & Sports Ministers from across the AGCC states as distinguished guests to attend this prestigious event on the world sports calendar.

As Managing Director of ADIMSC, Mr **Faisal Seddiq M Samea** confirmed: "Everything is now in place; the competitors have arrived, safety and security arrangements are prepared and reporters from major international publications and various satellite television stations around the globe are already here to provide world coverage of this ultimate race in one of the world's most exciting sports."

Ten countries are being represented with 12 drivers racing for the first time in Abu Dhabi.

The Italians broke into the sport about three years ago and with four drivers. **Guido Capelini** is already set to take the 1993 title with 100 points giving him an unbeatable lead ahead of Germany's second placed **Michael Werner**.

However, Britain is presenting a determined show of force with 6 drivers, including twice former World Champion **Jonathan Jones**, who is currently placed third overall in this year's series.

Three of the five Swedish drivers are well placed and very close in points with **Goran Karlof** in fourth position with 47 points, **Thomas Eriksson** in fifth place and **Anders Andersson** in sixth place—each with 46 points.

Further down the field are drivers from Japan, Australia, Thailand and Puerto Rico (**Felix Seralles** will be representing the UAE's Victory team), with a first appearance this year from Frenchman **Bernard Sebbah** who hasn't had much luck with a total of just 4 points to his credit!

Another strong contingent is coming from South Africa with a total of 6 drivers led by **Peter Lindenberg** who has the most experience having won races previously on the world circuit. The other five drivers—including the youngest ever to race in the F1 series, **Renier Engelbrecht** who began two years ago at the age of 19—will be competing for the first time outside their country.■

● The Amman Marriott Hotel and Aramex International Courier have signed a mutual agreement through their customer service-oriented philosophy. For both the Amman Marriott and Aramex, this agreement is a step towards achieving their 1994 objectives and is a commitment towards customer satisfaction. It provides their customers with the types of services expected and required throughout the market.

American singers revive Bel Canto traditions

By Mary Denis
Special to The Star

THE AUDITORIUM of the RCC appeared too small to hold the resonance of powerful and soulful opera voices accompanied by the NMC orchestra and the long applause and bravos that filled it last Monday evening. **Arturo Romani**, lyrical tenor, and **Ella Lee**, dramatic soprano, both internationally acclaimed opera singers, offered the Amman audience a splendid operative performance.

The NMC orchestra accompanying the two American opera singers presented a totally new range of music in a repertoire that 'graduated' them to a higher level of competence. Earlier opera works of the 17th and the 18th century and Negro spirituals were featured during the performance.

Descendant of a royal Italian family, Romani has a 'noble' voice that impressed the listeners with professionalism and competence. His silky smooth voice, as though it caressed the music itself, was more than a display of beauty. It touched the very core of the meaning of the music Romani sang giving it his personal vocal interpretation.

Romani sang tenor roles in many full operas performed in Europe and the USA—'Barber of Seville', 'La Traviata', 'Don Giovanni'—to name but a few. He was also a principle tenor soloist in numerous Oratorios ('Messiah' by Handel, 'The Coronation Mass' by Mozart as well as many others).

Ella Lee

Arturo Romani, Italian-born American opera singer, who is also known for acting in movies and TV films, is a great enthusiast of the *Bel Canto* tradition in opera singing. It is a style of operatic singing (*Bel Canto* in Italian means beautiful singing) which is characterized by lightness, a pleasant sound and natural melodic flow of music rendered by a singer without the strain of his or her voice.

The music of *Bel Canto* tradition is rarely performed nowadays, and that is one of the reasons, Romani says, why he and his wife Ella Lee established the 'Romani Foundation' some ten years ago with the purpose of providing music classes and performance opportunities for talented musicians at the beginning of their operatic career. Through their concerts, they hope to revive the *Bel Canto* tradition.

The musical program was fully integrated. The earlier opera works of the 17th century composers such as **Cavalli, Carissimi, Durante** and the 18th century works by **Beethoven**'s Cantata 'Ah Perfido', Op. 65, **Mozart**'s 'Don Giovanni' were played almost in chronological order providing an historical background into the development of opera. These arias were linked on the spiritual side with Negro spirituals sung by Ella Lee.

The Romani Foundation is a non-profit music organization based in Los Angeles, and as the singer explains, helps promote cross-cultural exchange programs between America and Europe.

The Foundation is also planning to extend its activities to Jordan. "It looks like we can do the same here. We would like to encourage the Conservatory to participate with us."

During their working visit, Romani and Lee are planning to hold master classes, to give some lectures and to visit Yarmouk University.

Ella Lee, dramatic soprano, won the audience with her powerful voice, magnetic stage personality and soulful rendering of Negro spirituals. Lee-Romani sang leading soprano roles with prestigious Opera houses in the USA and Europe. She has also appeared on Austrian and German TV.

The latest NMC Orchestra performance differs in several ways from previous concerts. In instrumental performances there is a direct communication, a "dialogue," between the conductor and the orchestra's musicians.

But when an orchestra accompanies singing, three "units"—orchestra, conductor and singers—must put their efforts together to produce one homogeneous musical entity.

Arturo Romani

Dr **Kifah Fakhoury**, NMC director and the Orchestra conductor, explains that in these performances the driving force and initiators are usually the singers. They normally initiate the dialogue with the orchestra. "The conductor becomes more of a medium through whom they relate their musical sentiments to the musicians of the orchestra and eventually to the listeners."

For Dr Fakhoury, whose duty as the NMC director dominates even his private life, the conducting of this performance was a professional stimulus. Musician, composer and educationalist in his own right with numerous works published or staged, he jokes, "our latest presentation awoke a musician in me."

"It was also a productive, rewarding experience for the Orchestra—they rehearsed long hours, learned many new pieces in a short time and became acquainted with the techniques of accompanying operative singing." Not without flaws though, losing tempo at times, the Orchestra still did remarkably well.

Teacher at heart, Fakhoury did not conduct his orchestra in a strictly mechanical fashion. He was sensitive to the presence of what the singers were aiming for—rendering through voices the soul of earlier opera and spirituals—and securing it effectively.

But above all it was sheer pleasure for the audience to sample some of the great but rarely played works by operatic forefathers and to get an insight into its beginnings.■

Agenda

EXHIBITIONS

☛ Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation is hosting an exhibition of paintings by **Fakhr El Nissa Zeid** at Darat Al Funun until 15 January.

☛ The Goethe Institute is hosting Jordanian artist **Shaher Al Jirmi** in an exhibition of paintings until 14 December.

☛ At the French Cultural Center, **Khalid Khries** will be displaying his paintings until 18 December.

☛ An exhibition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the death of **Guy de Maupassant** is on display at the French Cultural Center until 13 January 1994.

☛ **Farghali Abdel Hafiez**'s exhibition at Balq'a Art Gallery runs until 15 December.

☛ The FoA Photography Competition and Exhibit is underway at the FoA Center until 22 December.

LECTURES

☛ *New Developments in the Excavations at Aqaba/Ayla* will be the subject of a lecture by **Dr Donald Whitcomb**, Thursday, 9 December at ACOR. On Monday, 13 December, **Dr Philip Edwards** and **Dr Philip Macumber** will give a lecture on *Earliest Humans in the Jordan Rift Valley* at the FoA Center at 7:00 pm.

CONCERT

☛ The Regency Palace Hotel will host the award-winning *Belaros Trio* in a concert, Tuesday, 14 December at 8:00 pm. Tickets are JD 7 each and are available at the Goethe Institute.

FILMS

☛ **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning** will be screened at the British Council, Wednesday 15 December at 7:00 pm.

The American Center will screen **Dumbo**, Thursday 9 December at 5:00 pm with a repeat on Sunday.

★★In the Stars★★

ARIES (21 March-19 April): Concentrate or you'll make dumb mistakes! Avoid major decisions, but do finish something. Relax with your favorite partner.

TAURUS (20 April-20 May): You'll do fine—especially in romance. Don't put on pressure for a commitment yet. Work on a project.

GEMINI (21 May-21 June): Pay more attention to your roommate and also clean your house. Maybe you can do both simultaneously. You should be in a great mood all week.

CANCER (22 June-22 July): A good time for memorizing dates of figures, although errands may get in the way. A friend may demand attention. You could stay up all night talking.

LEO (23 July-22 August): This is a marvelous week for you, romance-wise. Make yourself available to fall in love—at least once.

VIRGO (23 August-22 September): The moon is in your sign, so you'll be more of a perfectionist than usual. Remember that, if you're considering bashing a sloppy roommate.

LIBRA (23 September-23 October): The pressure's on, especially if you didn't plan ahead. You'll be a mental giant. Write papers, give lectures and dazzle your friends.

SCORPIO (24 October-21 November): Work with a social action group. If you don't have one—form one. Decisions could go awry. Romance ought to be fun with a free spirit.

SAGITTARIUS (22 November-21 December): Mercury's going into your sign, making you even smarter. You may still need to have studied the material though.

CAPRICORN (22 December-19 January): It's a good week for travel, if you are caught up in all your work, which you probably aren't. It may be a tedious time.

AQUARIUS (20 January-18 February): You should be in a fine mood this week. You'll get even more done if you're working with a team.

PISCES (19 February-20 March): You may get pushed hard by a seemingly kind associate. Actually, it IS for your own good! Confide your woes to your best friend.

Scribbles

The sound we should all hear!

THE INVENTION of the telephone (I don't even quite know how long ago) is one that merits applause. It truly is one of those inventions that make us today wonder what life without it must have been like.

Of course, since that incredibly ingenious breakthrough, scientists have ceaselessly come up with even more breathtaking developments.

Since that day, the telephone has become a chameleon. It is not only a stable entity on a side table next to a cozy sofa or a bed, but it has also become portable. You can use it while walking around a house or office and feel free to have a conversation without the restrictions of wires or cords.

The telephone has also been introduced in cars and airplanes. I have become used to the idea of seeing car phones. It would be extremely convenient in a dreadful traffic jam or in the case of an emergency. However, the airplane telephone still baffles me—and I would love to try it!!

In more advanced countries, the portable telephone has become almost invisible. It is so small that you can put it away in a pocket. These so-called Cellulars may be used anywhere you travel—in restaurants, on the streets or even during a workout!

Isn't it delightful to feel that the telephone, an essential element in today's life, has progressed so much? It has enabled us to use and abuse it to fulfill our basic needs.

However, today we are limited by the availability of telephones! Doesn't it seem strange and annoying to see that because of the increase of the population in Jordan telephone systems aren't expanding as rapidly?—they haven't actually expanded at all!

The use of a telephone (of course just a simple one and not one with any modifications!) isn't a luxury anymore. It is nothing but an indispensable everyday item.

It was the other day when I went to the post office in one of the newer areas, that I realized that they didn't even have a telephone installed! I had just licked my last stamp on a letter, when I remembered I needed to make a call.

"We haven't been able to get a line yet!" the post office employee replied.

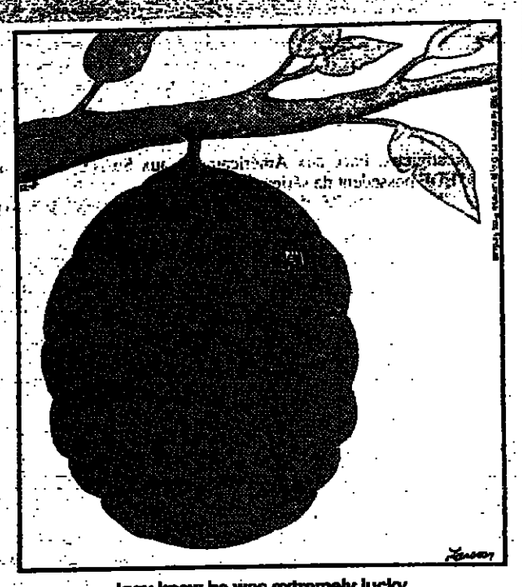
I laughed and thought that if a post office hadn't been able to get a line yet... there was certainly a problem.

I then came to realize that the average housewife, business owner, industrialist, chemist and doctor shouldn't feel bad at all. They could continue to offer sums of money and hope for a telephone. The post office was certainly not as lucky!!

We will continue to hear of even more incredible inventions as we strive to get the old ones right.■

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Iggy knew he was extremely lucky to get a room with a view.

"OK, everyone, we'll be departing for Antarctica in about 15 minutes.... If anyone thinks he may be in the wrong migration, let us know now."

"Hey Bob ... did I scare you or what?"

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Hommage à une grande dame

● Du portrait de sa grand-mère en 1915 aux gouaches du crépuscule de sa vie datées 1991, la Fondation Shoman propose un raccourci saisissant de l'odyssée picturale de Fahr El Nissa Zeid, à la galerie Darat al Funun. Un hommage à cette grande dame de la peinture contemporaine voulu par une de ses élèves, Suha Shoman.

Sur les murs se juxtaposent encres, dessins, affiches d'exposition, photos d'atelier... Des œuvres inédites, jamais exposées en Jordanie, en provenance directe de la collection de son fils, le prince Ra'ad. Au delà de l'itinéraire fascinant d'une artiste, c'est l'histoire de l'évolution de la peinture de ce siècle qui s'illustre.

A partir de 1928, Paris est la ville d'adoption de Fahr El Nissa Zeid. Elle y passera du figuratif à l'abstraction pour adopter un style acclamé par ses contemporains: "un art indépendant, absolument unique et originale". En 1976, elle vient s'installer en Jordanie où elle crée le premier Institut des Beaux-Arts. A la fin de sa vie, elle revient à des thèmes orientaux, comme celui des derviches tourneurs. Un souvenir d'enfance, celui d'Istambul.

Un trésor unique à sauvegarder

Les rouleaux de cuivre de la mer Morte sont partis en France pour être restaurés. Une opération délicate sur un trésor mystérieux.

LE 11 novembre au matin, Jacques Seigne traverse Amman sous haute escorte. Une quinzaine de policiers est mobilisée pour l'accompagner à l'aéroport. Les formalités sont expédiées et il embarque dans l'appareil. Derrière son siège, un policier veille, à ses pieds, une valise... Direction Paris et les laboratoires d'Electricité de France (EDF).

"J'avais la sensation d'être au cœur d'un 'James Bond'", confie le responsable en Jordanie de l'Institut français du Proche-Orient (IFAPO). Un voyage sous haute surveillance pour le transport d'un trésor inestimable du patrimoine jordanien et mondial. Dans l'anonyme valise de Jacques Seigne se trouvaient les rouleaux de cuivre de la mer Morte, vieux de 2000 ans!

Découverts le 20 mars 1952 dans une grotte près de Qumran, en Cisjordanie, ces rouleaux demeurent une énigme. Plusieurs centaines de manuscrits sur cuir ou parchemin de l'époque biblique ont été mis à jour, au cours de ces fouilles, dans les grottes de Qumran. Mais, ces rouleaux sont les seuls à être en métal, en cuivre. Le texte hébreu aussi est unique. Dans ceux-ci, rien de religieux, mais une liste étrange... de trésors.

"Dans le Vallon Extérieur, à mi-chemin de la partie abrupte, près de la pierre, creuse dix-sept coudées: sous elle, il y a de l'argent et de l'or...". Soixante-quatre cachettes différentes sont ainsi répertoriées. A portée de pioche, un gigantesque trésor composé surtout de métal précieux, mais aussi de vases d'aromates, de bois de santal, de vêtements sacrés...etc...

"La communauté de Qumran a dû vouloir protéger ses richesses à la veille d'une invasion. Peut-être avant celle de l'empereur Titus en 67 de notre ère", propose Jacques Seigne. Ces trésors ont-ils vraiment existé? Dorment-ils toujours sous la pierre ou ont-ils été déterrés depuis? Nul ne le sait. Avis aux apprentis chercheurs d'or: le nom de ces lieux est depuis longtemps oublié. Personne ne situe plus le "Vallon Extérieur".

La priorité aujourd'hui est de sauver ce mystérieux catalogue. Au cours des siècles, le cuivre s'est totalement oxydé. La restauration est urgente pour empêcher ces rouleaux de se transformer en poussière. Plusieurs laboratoires sont prêts à relever ce défi prestigieux. Face aux Américains et aux Suisses, les Français d'EDF possèdent de sérieux atouts.

"Nous avons été très impressionnés par le travail de restauration en cours par les laboratoires d'EDF sur nos précieux objets de Mafraq", confie Safwan Tell, directeur général du Département des antiquités. "Il y a cinq mois, ils nous ont envoyé un projet complet de traitement des rouleaux de la mer Morte avec la prise en charge de toutes les dépenses de restauration, d'emballage, de transport et d'assurance, avec la garantie de l'Ambassade de France". Coût estimé: 1 500 000 FF.

Grâce au sérieux de ce document et à l'absence de propositions concrètes des Américains, EDF emporte le marché, le mois dernier, sur décision ministérielle. Quelques jours après, les rouleaux partent vers la France. Une décision souveraine qui fait bien des jaloux... ■

F.C.

Archéologie

L'ABC du mécénat EDF

Electricité de France est engagée dans cinq projets de mécénat technologique en Jordanie. De Pétra aux rouleaux de la mer Morte en passant par Jérash. Un record.

RECONCILIER TECHNOLOGIE et culture: un pari tenu par Electricité de France (EDF) depuis dix ans. A l'origine, un homme: Marc Albouy. "J'en avais assez de distribuer de l'argent dans des opérations qui ne m'intéressaient pas. Je pensais qu'il y avait mieux à faire". Dans le cerveau de ce contrôleur général d'EDF naît une idée originale: le mécénat technologique et scientifique.

"Les innovations techniques étaient jusqu'alors confinées à l'industrie. Pourquoi ne pas en faire profiter d'autres domaines? Transférer notre savoir-faire technologique pour aider la culture, l'environnement, le patrimoine, la création artistique, la santé, l'action humanitaire...". Depuis, l'idée a fait son chemin. Marc Albouy est fier d'avoir convaincu une quarantaine d'entreprises et de grandes écoles à le suivre dans cette démarche.

EDF reste le fer de lance de ce mécénat technologique. Après le retentissement mondial de la reconstitution du temple de Karnak sur ordinateur, l'entreprise publique française est actuellement engagée dans 25 réalisations aux quatre coins de la planète. La semaine dernière, l'équipe de Marc Albouy était en Jordanie, le pays où le plus grand nombre de projets est en cours.

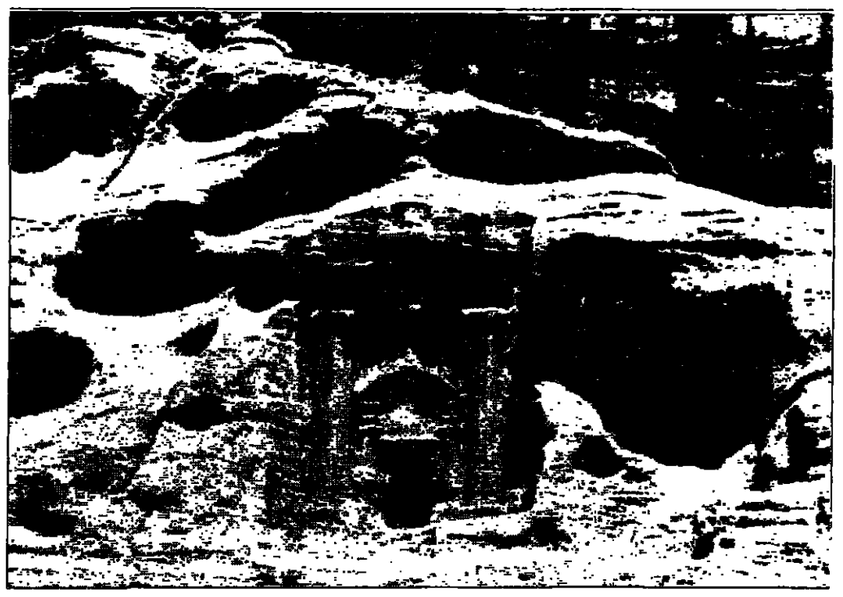
Le dernier coup d'éclat de l'entreprise est d'avoir obtenu l'expertise et le traitement des rouleaux de la mer Morte (voir encadré ci-contre). "C'est un challenge technique extraordinaire sur un élément extraordinaire du patrimoine mondial. Nous allons faire plancher nos laboratoires les plus pointus, nos 400 experts du nucléaire", s'enthousiasme Marc Albouy.

Ces laboratoires sont certainement parmi les seuls au monde à pouvoir restaurer des objets métalliques totalement minéralisés. Les Américains ne s'y sont pas trompés. C'est aux experts français qu'ils ont confié la tâche de sauver les objets issus du Titanic. Bel hommage...

Marc Albouy se défend de faire du marketing pour le compte de son entreprise. "Je ne choisis pas les projets en fonction de leur impact médiatique". En fait, il s'est totalement pris au jeu. Derrière chaque projet, chaque objet, il cherche à trouver "la belle histoire" qui comblera sa soif de connaissance. Par exemple, pour compléter le traitement des objets en bronze de Mafraq, en cours actuellement, des historiens ont été mis à contribution pour élucider la provenance du brasero.

En plus de la remise en forme de l'objet, les équipes d'EDF s'intéressent donc à leur signification et définissent des règles de conservation à suivre dans l'avenir. Mais, le mécénat ne se décrète pas. L'enthousiasme doit être transmis aux chercheurs. "Imaginons qu'ils soient des joueurs de tennis dans un circuit professionnel. Moi, je leur propose une partie amicale, moins stressante, où ils peuvent essayer des coups nouveaux qu'ils pourront ensuite rejouer dans le circuit", explique le créateur de ce mécénat.

Pierre Deletie, ingénieur géologue de l'entreprise, s'est lui aussi pris au jeu. En travaillant depuis plus de quinze ans sur la construction de barrages dans les deux hémisphères, il est devenu "le" spécialiste du vieillissement des roches. "Lorsqu'on projette de faire durer un ouvrage dix mille ans, il faut bien connaître l'évolution des matériaux, du béton et des pierres du site".



Le grès de Pétra souffre principalement de l'humidité et non du vent. Une découverte décisive de l'équipe EDF. Contre ce mal, l'entreprise française propose un traitement révolutionnaire.

Mais, 95% des cours d'eau français sont maintenant équipés d' un barrage. Les connaissances de Pierre Deletie peuvent trouver application dans d'autres domaines. En avant pour le mécénat technologique!

Avec Pétra, le chercheur d'EDF a trouvé un casse-tête à la mesure de son savoir. Surprise: le vent n'est pas le facteur décisif de l'érosion, mais l'humidité. La remontée capillaire depuis les nappes phréatiques fragilise le grès, le détruit peu à peu. Pierre Deletie a découvert le mal, il a aussi trouvé le remède.

Les tests conduits à l'université de Nancy sur les échantillons prélevés dans les tombes nabatéennes sont concluants. Le truc? Imperméabiliser le grès en bouchant tous ses pores. Le moyen? Faire circuler au cœur de la roche, grâce à un champ magnétique, de minuscules capsules chargées d'ions positifs ou négatifs. Les capsules s'autodétruisent, les ions se marient... et forment un cristal. Le grès est "cimenté"!

Cette technique d'imprégnation matricielle est un brevet exclusif EDF. Un premier essai sur le site même de Pétra est prévu pour le printemps prochain. Probablement sur une colonne. "A terme, le but est de former un Jordanien à cette technique pour effectuer un transfert total de technologie".

Toujours à Pétra, l'entreprise française est prête à financer une étude hydraulique complète du site. L'eau est toujours l'ennemi à maîtriser, en particulier les crues saisonnières dévastatrices. C'est aussi une richesse à mieux conserver et exploiter. L'entreprise de photos par satellite SPOT se joint à l'opération pour fournir la première carte géologique précise de Wadi Moussa et Pétra.

La première adepte des idées et travaux d'EDF dans le Royaume est sûrement la reine Noor. A quelques heures de leur départ du pays, la Reine a reçu longuement Marc Albouy et son équipe au palais royal. Déjà en octobre dernier, à l'inauguration de l'Exposition sur Pétra, Sa Majesté s'était passionnée pour tous ces projets.

Cerise sur le gâteau: l'entreprise française souhaite permettre la représentation en conception assistée sur ordinateur du temple de Zeus. Le sanctuaire fondateur de Jérash pourrait ainsi renaître en images virtuelles à travers un livre et même un film. Un coup de pouce en forme d'hommage pour l'équipe de l'IFAPO. A la dernière minute, EDF s'est donc engagée une nouvelle fois dans le Royaume. Le cinquième projet! L'investissement s'élève maintenant à quatre millions de Francs. ■

Florent Chevolleau

Jordanie Express

GOUVERNEMENT - Neuf nouveaux ministres sont entrés au gouvernement, dont une femme, la première depuis neuf ans, et quatre porte-feuilles ont changé de mains. Voilà l'essentiel du remaniement ministériel opéré par le Premier ministre, Abdul Salam Al Majali, à une semaine du vote de confiance.

Pour la première fois, aucun ministre n'est issu de la nouvelle Chambre basse. Les deux "députés-ministres" viennent du Sénat. La figure féminine de ce nouveau gouvernement se nomme Rima Khalaf. Elle prend la tête du ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie.

CRITIQUES - Le gouvernement a dû affronter un feu nourri de critiques au cours des quatre jours de débat au Parlement sur le vote de confiance. De nombreux députés ont dénoncé "les pratiques non démocratiques" du cabinet Majali, en particulier lors des dernières élections et des nominations administratives.

Les islamistes ont aussi appelé au retrait de la Jordanie des pourparlers de paix. Après cette "tempête dans l'hémicycle", le gouvernement semblait assuré d'obtenir la confiance de la Chambre basse, mais avec une majorité très courte.

Analyse

La crise politique du Maghreb

Rémy Leveau, professeur de Science Po Paris, est venu expliquer les principales données de la crise politique des pays du Maghreb au World Affairs Council et au CERMOC.

AU MOMENT où l'Algérie revit la spirale sanglante du terrorisme et de la répression armée, les analyses de Rémy Leveau, professeur à l'Institut d'études politiques de Paris, sont plus que jamais d'actualité. Auteur d'un récent ouvrage sur le monde arabe intitulé "Le sabre et le turban", ce spécialiste du Maghreb est venu apporter des éclaircissements sur la crise politique que traversent ces pays. Cette crise de la transition démocratique et du processus électoral trouve d'ailleurs bien des échos dans le Royaume aujourd'hui.

"Les pays du Maghreb doivent faire face à un changement profond de société: le passage d'une société rurale à une société urbaine. Le challenge de ces régimes est de parvenir à intégrer politiquement une population croissante, en mutation, en particulier les jeunes", a expliqué le chercheur français devant l'auditoire studieux du World Affairs Council. En l'espace d'une génération, la population de chacun des trois pays a doublé!

Cette mutation sociale est un véritable défi. "Aux nouveaux besoins en matière d'éducation, de logement, d'emploi (...etc...), l'Etat n'est pas capable de répondre à la jeune génération". Cette impuissance étatique est, pour Rémy Leveau, la raison principale de la crise politique du Maghreb à la fin des années 80.

Chaque pays a suivi un parcours politique différent, mais les interactions entre la Tunisie, l'Algérie et le Maroc sont nombreuses. L'arrivée de Ben Ali à la tête de l'Etat tunisien, en 1987, à la place de Bourguiba, permet le renouvellement des élites. "La vieille garde part à la retraite et Ben Ali appelle auprès de lui des personnalités venues des milieux universitaires, de sociétés de défense des droits de l'homme et même de l'opposition". Les élections législatives et présidentielles consacrent, en 1989, grâce à ces aménagements internes, le triomphe du parti unique.

Rémy Leveau, directeur du cycle du Moyen-Orient contemporain à l'Institut d'études politiques de Paris, à la tribune du World Affairs Council.

"Comme dans tous ces pays, la Crise du Golfe marque un tournant en Tunisie", souligne Rémy Leveau. Les manifestations en faveur du régime irakien enflamment l'opinion publique. Les islamistes, qui jusqu'alors jouaient le jeu du compromis avec le gouvernement, décident de se placer dans une opposition claire à l'extérieur du système politique en place.

En Algérie, le détonateur de la crise politique est la répression sanglante des émeutes de 1988. "C'est un choc pour le système. A ce moment, l'Etat algérien est dans l'impossibilité de tenir son rôle traditionnel, celui d'un Etat qui répond à tous les besoins de sa population. La chute du prix du pétrole ne lui permet plus ces largesses".

Le passage d'une économie étatique à une économie libérale est douloureux. "A la différence du président tunisien, Chadli n'a pas le contrôle de son parti, le FLN. Pour contrer ses opposants, il décide le passage au multipartisme et aux élections démocratiques". A travers les mosquées et les associations, le parti islamiste, le FIS, s'organise le plus rapidement et rafle 55% des voix et la plupart des grandes villes du pays, lors des élections de 1990.

"La Crise du Golfe donne l'illusion aux leaders islamistes qu'ils peuvent gagner rapidement le pouvoir. Ils n'hésitent pas à s'opposer à l'armée, à la dénigrer". A la veille des élections législatives, l'armée prend sa revanche en obtenant l'application de l'état d'urgence. Dans les états-majors, la victoire islamiste est inacceptable.

"Cependant, le processus électorale continue", rappelle l'auteur de "Le sabre et le turban". "Au premier tour des législatives, le FIS gagne 47% des votes. Un recul par rapport aux municipales. Mais avec l'effet du scrutin majoritaire, les islamistes sont en mesure d'obtenir deux tiers des députés et donc de changer la Constitution". Entre les deux tours, début 1992, l'armée stoppe le processus démocratique.

L'impasse politique algérienne met en valeur le modèle marocain basé sur le compromis et l'allégeance royale. Le pluralisme politique existe au niveau des élites par un système de cooptation, même les communistes en profitent. "Mais, avec la Guerre du Golfe et la fin de la crise du Sahara, ce pluralisme des élites est difficile à tenir", explique Rémy Leveau. Les manifestations de rue ne sont pas réprimées et le Roi engage un dialogue avec les leaders de l'opposition.

Après un référendum-plébiscite pour Hassan II, le processus électoral s'engage avec le renouvellement par tiers du Parlement au suffrage indirect, puis direct. En juin dernier, partis d'opposition et partis monarchistes font jeu égal. Aux élections de septembre, les monarchistes reprennent le dessus en jouant de leur influence sur le terrain. "La perspective d'une ouverture du gouvernement aux opposants est abandonnée".

Dans les locaux du CERMOC, mercredi, c'est le processus électoral jordanien qui était sur la sellette. Le chercheur français a pu trouver des parallèles à faire avec la situation au Maghreb: "De grandes similitudes existent entre la monarchie jordanienne et la monarchie marocaine dans la gestion du processus démocratique". Rémy Leveau récuse toute diabolisation des islamistes. Selon lui, ils peuvent jouer un rôle positif en intégrant les masses populaires au jeu politique. "Un rôle comparable à celui tenu par les partis communistes, au début du siècle, en Europe". ■

F.C.

Cinéma-concert

Nosferatu ou les gammes de l'horreur

Le Centre culturel français et l'Institut Goethe présentent le "Nosferatu" de F.W. Murnau au Centre culturel royal, jeudi 16. Un événement musical et cinématographique.

APRES LE succès de la projection de "Un chapeau de paille d'Italie", le mois dernier, le Centre culturel français s'associe à l'Institut Goethe pour renouveler l'expérience du "cinéma concert" avec "Nosferatu" de F.W. Murnau, mis en musique par le virtuose Jean-Marie Sénia. Le principe est le même: un chef d'œuvre du cinéma muet accompagné par un pianiste. Mais, d'une comédie française enlevée, nous passons, avec "Nosferatu", aux ténèbres de l'expressionnisme allemand. Frissons garantis...

Nosferatu, c'est Dracula. Le vampire des Carpathes, assoiffé d'hémoglobine, qui sème terreur et désolation sur son chemin. Tapi dans son sinistre château de Transylvanie, le vampire dort le jour dans un cercueil pour mieux sortir la nuit et se nourrir du sang de ses victimes. A l'énoncé de son nom, les visages se glacent: le Comte Orlock, alias Nosferatu, alias Comte de Dracula.

La fuite de sa dernière victime, un jeune agent immobilier animé d'un amour fou pour sa femme, va faire sortir le monstre de sa tanière. Nosferatu s'embarque pour une macabre croisière sur un voilier chargé de cercueils et envahi par les rats. A chaque escale, le vaisseau fantôme déclenche la peste et la désolation. Dernière étape: un petit port allemand où le vampire affronte la jeune femme de l'agent immobilier. Combat ultime entre la mort et l'amour.

Avec ses paysages désolés et grandioses, son château grinçant et terrible, ses ruelles obscures et hantées, les images ténébreuses du film de Murnau glacent immédiatement le sang des spectateurs. Le réalisateur allemand réussit, en 1921, dans son "Nosferatu" la synthèse d'une époque qui a le goût des monstres, des vampires, des fantômes ou des robots maléfiques. C'est l'époque de "Metropolis" et de "Docteur Jekyll et M. Hyde".

Ce chef d'œuvre de l'expressionnisme allemand est la première transposition à l'écran du "Dracula" de Brian Stoker. Il marquera tous les avatars cinématographiques suivants. Du remake de Werner Herzog avec Isabelle Adjani, dans les années 70, au dernier succès de F.F. Coppola fidèle au roman noir anglais. "Mais, aucun de ces succédanés ne vaut l'original", assure Frédéric De Brion, responsable de la Cellule audiovisuelle régionale. "J'ai voulu faire un clin d'œil au créateur du mythe, à Murnau". Un hommage sublimé par la partition originale de Jean-Marie Sénia.

Ce pianiste français est le roi de la B.O. (bande originale). Pour le cinéma, la télévision et le théâtre, Jean-Marie Sénia a composé près de 200 musiques. Six fois, les professionnels de l'image ont consacré son travail en le nominant au Sept d'or (récompenses annuelles de la télévision française). Mais, son exercice favori est l'improvisation au piano. Après des expériences réussies au théâtre, il s'est lancé dans l'accompagnement des films muets. Sans partition ou presque, dans la grande tradition des premières années du Septième art.

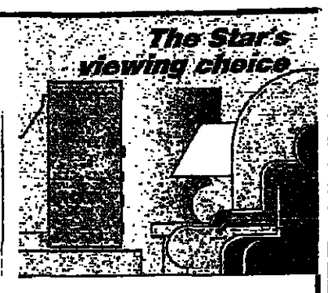
Chaque projection est en fait une création. Pour le pianiste, c'est un challenge excitant et éprouvant de redonner toutes leurs couleurs musicales aux images en noir et blanc. Jeudi 16, les spectateurs du Centre culturel royal assisteront à une création éphémère, puisque aucune représentation n'est enregistrée.

Film pionnier dans l'horreur, "Nosferatu" n'est, de plus, pas un long métrage comme les autres. Si le générique indique l'acteur de music-hall Max Schreck dans le rôle du vampire, il est établi que ce renseignement est volontairement faux. Pourquoi cette mystification? Qui se cache derrière ce grimage génial? Depuis des décennies, le mystère reste entier. Serait-ce Nosferatu en personne?... ■

F.C.

The Star's GUIDE TV

Programs on JTV from 11—18 Dec.



A Yank at Oxford
Tuesday, 10:20 pm

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

08:30 — The Fanelli Boys
09:00 — Da Beat's On
09:30 — Perspectives
10:00 — News at Ten
10:20 — Feature Film: On the Streets of LA. Upon release from prison, a father and his son try their best not to get sent back to jail.

SUNDAY

08:30 — You Bet Your Life, with Bill Cosby
09:10 — Thirty Something. After having her second son, Hope feels guilty for not having devoted enough time for Michael. To remedy this, she has a birthday party for him.
10:00 — News at Ten
10:20 — The Men Who Killed Kennedy. (Episode 3) The aspects of the assassination two government enquiries tried to conceal in order to propagate the "lone-assassin" theory.

MONDAY

08:30 — Delta
09:10 — The House Of Eliott. Beatrice and Jack's relationship deepens. The two sisters are also introduced to a top fashion writer.
10:00 — News at Ten
10:20 — The Guilty
11:10 — The Sleeping Beauty (Part 2). A ballet performance of The Sleeping Beauty by the Leningrad Russian Ballet Company.

TUESDAY

08:30 — Night Court. Dan's friends gather to cheer him up after an ulcer operation.
09:10 — Brand New Life. Barbara tries hard to divide her time between her family and her studies at law school.
10:00— News at Ten
10:20—A Yank at Oxford. A light comedy about an American who's granted a scholarship to study at Oxford University in England.

WEDNESDAY

08:30 — Too Close for Comfort
09:00 — Documentary: Ocean World. With the help of montage editing, unique footage of whales and dolphins is presented in a kaleidoscopic view of the underwater world.
10:00 — News at Ten
10:20 — Mini Series: Till Murder Do Us Part. (Part II). Betty feels betrayed upon the divorce between her and her husband.

THURSDAY

08:30 — Family Matters
09:00 — Reasonable Doubts
10:00 — News at Ten
10:20 — Movie of the Week: Seagulls Fly Low. A story about two of three partners in a corporation who, driven by a hunger for power and domination, hire a professional killer to rid them of their third partner.

FRIDAY

08:30 — ENG. Mike's worries this time happen outside Channel 10. He gets into trouble looking for his missing daughter.
09:10 — Faces and Places
10:00 — News at Ten
10:20 — Night of Courage (Part I). Prejudice against color and race in America is revealed through the story of a Mexican who pays for falling in love with a white girl.

Reasonalble Doubts, Thursday at 9:00 pm.

PROGRAMMES FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

05:30 — Pif et Hercule
05:41 — L'Ecole des Fans
06:30 — Beaumanoir
07:00 — Le Journal
07:15 — Ushuaia

DIMANCHE

5:30 — Film: 30 Ans ou la Vie d'un Joueur
07:00— Le Journal
07:15— Fenêtre Sur

LUNDI

05:30 — Les Aventuriers de L'espace
06:00 — Omnisciences
06:30 — Maguy
07:00 — Le Journal
07:15 — Magazine Sportif

MARDI

05:30 — Le Monde Sous-Marin
06:00 — Beaumanoir
07:00 —Le Journal
07:15 — Variétés

MERCREDI

05:30— Ordy
06:00 — Sports: NBA
07:00 — Le Journal
07:15— Le Journal de L'Histoire

JEUDI

05:30 — Taratata
07:00 — Le Journal
07:15 — Rencontre

VENDREDI

05:30 — Les Clés de Fort Boyard
07:00 — Le Journal
07:15 — Orient Sur Seine

Recommended Listenings

Danzig III: How the Gods Kill

GLENN DANZIG began his musical career by singing with the punk bands 'Misfits' and 'Smahain'. In the autumn of 1988, he decided to form his own Danzig that had a much accessible sound than the former group. The band's music was solid hard rock, though some would categorize it as black metal, that is comparable with later material by the 'Cult'. At any rate, it was dark music with obvious satanic influences and anti-religious lyrics, as the band's emblem is simply an upside down cross.

The band's self-titled 'Danzig I' album, produced by Rick Rabin, was released in 1988 and was followed by another album, 'Danzig II 777 Lucifage, released in 1990. The latter came after a tour with Metallica and was better produced than the former, although its 'material' was far from being close to Danzig I.

Danzig's third album, 'Danzig III How the Gods Kill', released in June 1992, was a bit different in style from the first two releases. Still black and 'evil', Danzig's atmospheric vocals are a little bassy and the whole thing sounds like a bizarre mixture of Jim Morrison, Elvis, Type O Negative and Black Sabbath! The music, heavy and intense as it is, is sometimes broken by a bit of weakness in the production in some places where you can almost 'see through' the guitars of John Christ (the album was produced by Glenn Danzig himself). The production as a whole though is good with clear bass and slight keyboard touches.

The album opens with a powerful number called *Godless* that lasts for about six minutes and asks for no forgiveness, i.e it is anti-religious. Some of the most impressive tracks are *Bodies*, *How the Gods Kill* and *Heart of the Devil*. But best of all is the song *Sistinas* which has moving lyrics that go: "I lost my soul deep inside, and it's so black and cold deep inside...The sun don't shine, the wind won't blow when you go hide without your love, I'm lonely deep inside." A brilliant song that captures the feelings of a tortured lovely soul, other songs are lyrically vague but contain no blasphemy as the word satanic might suggest! With a total of 10 tracks, all bleaker than my grandma's fairytales, the album needs a person with a serious mental condition to take it.

Whether or not people look at Danzig as an egotistic and fake or as a real person who treats life seriously, I cannot deny the fact that he can turn his feelings into something unique. Looks like Glenn Danzig had taken an oath never to sing another song from the Misfits days like *I Turned into a Martian*!

Ayman Shihadeh

Jordanian TOP 30

Prepared by Stallions Co.

	Artist	Title
1	Bryan Adams	*So Far So Good*
2	Mariah Carey	*Music Box*
3	Scorpions	*Face the Heat*
4	Pearl Jam	*Pearl Jam*
5	Billy Joel	*River of Dreams*
6	Def Leppard	*Retroactive*
7	Kris Kross	*Da Bomb*
8	U2	*Zooropa*
9	Dr Dre	*The Chronic*
10	Phil Collins	*Both Sides*
11	Gloria Estefan	*Mi Tierra*
12	Bee Gees	*Size Isn't Everything*
13	Taylor Dayne	*Soul Dancing*
14	Khaled	*Nissi Nissi*
15	Chaka Demus & Pliers	*Tease Me*
16	Prince	*The Hits I & II*
17	UB 40	*Promises and Lies*
18	Soundtrack	*Last Action Hero*
19	Billy Idol	*Cyberpunk*
20	2 Unlimited	*No Limits*
21	Soul Asylum	*Grave Dancers Union*
22	Santana	*Sacred Fire*
23	Paul Young	*The Crossing*
24	Janet Jackson	*Janet*
25	4 Non Blondes	*Bigger, Better, Faster*
26	Terence Trent D'Arby	*Symphony or Damn*
27	Melessa Etheridge	*Yes I Am*
28	Sheena Easton	*No Strings*
29	Bell Biv Devoe	*Hootie Mack*
30	Soundtrack	*In the Line of Fire*

TOP POP ALBUMS

1. **River of Dreams**, *Billy Joel*, Columbia
2. **Sleepless in Seattle**, *Soundtrack*, Epic
3. **Black Sunday**, *Cypress Hill*, Ruffhouse
4. **Janet.**, *Janet Jackson*, Virgin
5. **Blind Melon**, *Blind Melon*, Capitol
6. **Core**, *Stone Temple Pilots*, Atlantic
7. **The World is Yours**, *Scarface*, Rap-A-Lot
8. **Promises and Lies**, *UB40*, Virgin

TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

1. **A Lot About Livin'**, *Alan Jackson*, Arista
2. **It Won't Be the Last**, *Billy Ray Cyrus*, Mercury
3. **No Time to Kill**, *Clint Black*, RCA
4. **Life's a Dance**, *John Michael Montgomery*, Atlantic
5. **Tell Me Why**, *Wynonna*, Curb
6. **Pure Country**, *George Strait*, MCA
7. **It's Your Call**, *Reba McEntire*, MCA

Russian space projects are in peril in an uncertain world

By Andrei Martov

HOPES OF bringing Russia into the North American and European space programs may have to be revised because of the virtual breakdown of the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

Conditions reached a new low in June. Poorly-paid Kazakh construction troops went on a rampage, burning three headquarters buildings, several clubs, a hospital and a library containing 12,000 books.

In the past year, Leninsk, the city where Baikonur is located, has seen the departure of 21,000 inhabitants, one-fifth of its population. Cinemas and other cultural buildings have closed. Shelves in shops are bare. Empty apartments have been taken over by outsiders.

The police force, reduced to one-third its size, faces a rising tide of robbery, molestation and drug abuse. Entry to the closed military city can be had for a 400-ruble bribe at the gate.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, the cosmodrome was designated the property of Kazakhstan, despite the state's lack of technical resources and specialized personnel to run it. Only 200 Kazakh officers serve on the technical side of the operation.

Attempts by the Russian and Kazaknstan governments to agree on rules for running the space center have not progressed beyond paper. Last year Russia announced the formation of special "military rocket forces" to take over the operations of Baikonur and other installations. Unwisely, it failed to consult other Commonwealth of Independent States members on their deployment.

Also, the Kazakhstan constitution forbids the basing of foreign troops on its soil. Russia, too, has a problem, in that only volunteer soldiers may now be posted abroad. With a volunteer costing 50,000 rubles per month in pay alone, sending them to Baikonur is outside the Defense Ministry budget.

The Kazakhstan government explored the possibility of inviting Western countries to launch their rockets from a privatized cosmodrome. When the Russian Defense Minister, General Pavel Grachev, heard of that plan he pointed out that the second state of any rocket launched from Baikonur must pass over Russian territory.

Spacemen at the Russian base in Baikonur face uncertain days

Having invested huge sums of money in the center, and with further space launches planned, Russia cannot simply write off Baikonur and concentrate on its other two space bases—in Kapustin Yar and Plesetsk.

Baikonur contains the only ramps suitable for launching the heavy rockets Proton and Energia.

A solution to the dispute looked near last summer when Russian and Kazakhstan ministerial delegations discussed setting up a joint organizations to run and develop the center. Under the plan, Russia would pay 94 percent of the costs and provide up to 6,000 conscript troops to guard it.

Kazakhstan agreed to receive up to 20,000 Russian soldiers on its territory in exchange for 500 additional places for Kazakhstan students at Russian military institutes.

Those agreements now seem unlikely to be honored. New construction has been halted and existing buildings are falling apart because of Russia's unwillingness to spend money on another country's property.

Huge temperature swings—from minus 40 degrees Celsius in the winter to plus 50 degrees Celsius in the summer—mean most of the center's communication equipment must be changed twice a year. Systems of all kinds need constant attention, but precautionary maintenance is kept to a bare minimum, with dangerous implications.

In an apparent warning of the consequences of neglect, the Russian army newspaper Krasnaya Zverzda in October referred for the first time publicly to a 1960 disaster when a long-range R-16 rocket exploded, killing 92 people

In an apparent warning of the consequences of neglect, the Russian army newspaper *Krasnaya Zverzda* in October referred for the first time publicly to a 1960 disaster when a long-range R-16 rocket exploded, killing 92 people.

Earlier this year, a Proton launcher carrying a Horizon communication satellite fell into the Pacific Ocean because unauthorized metal additives had entered the second and third stage fuel workings (it has not been established how). The launching of *Protons, Russia's most promising* rocket design, is now being moved to another base.

Meanwhile, the roof of the test-assembly building has become so leaky that during preparation of the launcher for a Franco-Russian space mission, rainwater poured *into the rocket.*

Just before it was sent to the launch pad, there was an electricity cut and an emergency circuit had to be activated. The evening after the launch, all Leninsk plunged into darkness.

Cessation of ownership has affected the attitude of Russian staff formerly responsible for security. No piece of equipment is safe from theft, including underground copper cables. At the same time, a rule forbidding the shipment of items abroad—including to Russia—for repair has led to a scarcity of working television sets and refrigerators.

The worst blow to morale has been the mass exodus of skilled staff. The chief of the center, Lt.-Gen. Aleksei Shumilin, says the rocket technology section, which normally employees 8,000 specialists, is 2,500 below strength. ■

Andrei Martov is the pseudonym of a leading Russian military commentator.

Bridge

By Tannah Hirsch

Go For the Quick Trick

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A K Q J
♡ 6 3
◇ A K 10 6 5
♣ A Q

WEST
♠ 8 6 3
♡ Q 10 7 5 2
◇ Q
♣ K 8 4 2

EAST
♠ 10 7 5
♡ K J 9 4
◇ J 9 8
♣ 7 6 3

SOUTH
♠ 9 4 2
♡ A 8
◇ 7 4 3 2
♣ J 10 9 5

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
2 ◇	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Five of ♡

It is difficult to solve a problem if you don't know that one exists. If that sounds somewhat paradoxical, read on.

There is little about the bidding that appeals to us. North's demand bid of two diamonds is a stretch although we concede that his is not an easy hand to bid. South's decision to rebid three no trump rather than take a diamond preference is a mystery to us. Observe that, as the cards lie, six diamonds makes (declarer wins the heart opening, cashes two high trumps and four spades, discarding dummy's losing heart, then takes the club finesse).

South's play matched his bidding. He won the heart opening lead and now had to run nine tricks before the opponents gained the lead, since they were poised to run off at least four more heart tricks. He cashed the ace-king of diamonds, but when that suit didn't break he was stuck in dummy and could collect no more than eight tricks.

It is a natural tendency to go after your long suit first and, had there been another entry to South's hand, he would have been right to tackle diamonds first in case the suit did split evenly.

However, a 2-2 diamond break is only a 40 percent chance. The alternative is a club finesse, which is a 50 percent shot. Since declarer is in his hand for the first and last time at trick one, he should lead a club to the queen. When that succeeds, he has boosted his total tricks to nine.

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WORD WISE

Q: I have a friend who fancies himself a wine expert. He always makes a big show of what he calls "decanting" the wine. All I see is him pouring it from a bottle into a fancy decanter. Is that all "decant" means and why the big fuss?

A: Decant does mean pouring a liquid from one vessel into another, but its other definition is why your friend goes to all that trouble. It is, according to Webster's, "drawing off a liquid without disturbing the sediment or the lower liquid layers."

Send questions or comments for Word Wise to P.O. Box 4367, Orlando, Fla. 32802-4367.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 Festive
5 Certain fruit
10 Put behind bars
14 Press
15 Rye fungus
16 Bone
17 Catalogue
18 Traveled way
19 Come down
20 Leeway
22 Horned animals, for short
24 Noble
25 Sticky stuff
28 Past
29 Unspoiled
33 Drives out
34 Torso
35 DeLuise
36 Doing nothing
37 Object
38 Mention for bravery
39 Spitchcock
40 Mystical card
41 Task
42 Insect trap
44 Straw hat
45 Freshly
46 Jack of TV, once
47 Holds fast
50 Manner of speech
54 Zhivago girl
55 Doubly
57 Postern
58 Take — view of
59 Flowers
60 Poet Lazarus
61 Tableland
62 Baking need
63 Oceans

DOWN
1 Fish organ
2 Melody
3 Bewildered
4 Remedy of a kind
5 Wig
6 Wear down
7 Chills and fever
8 Decay
9 British money
10 Tragic heroine
11 Chester — Arthur
12 — uncertain terms
13 Youths
21 Casks
23 Dry outer covering
25 Oink
26 Not long
27 Sing a certain way
28 Ravine
29 Preceding in time
30 Dunderhead
31 — Dame
32 Arabian ruler
34 Pitched
37 Wall hanging
38 Guessing game
40 Sharp flavor
41 Anthracite, for one
43 — Canal
44 Most stark
46 Steps
47 Close-mouthed one
48 Put cargo aboard
49 Rainbow
50 Leaning tower town
51 City in Alaska
52 Unconscious state
53 Times
56 Grief

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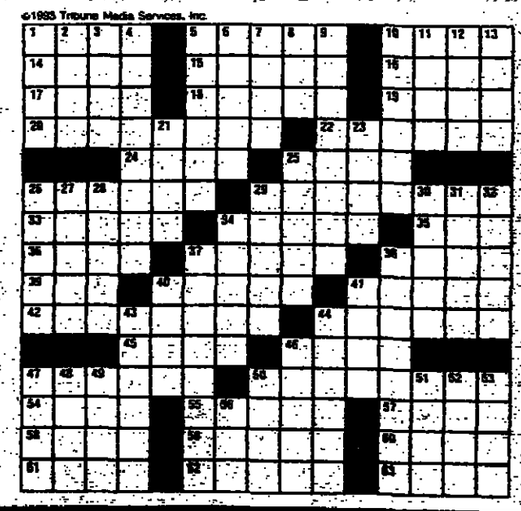

FEELIN —FIT!—

Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle, but learning new cooking techniques (e.g., steaming, not frying) and adjusting eating habits is the key to diet success. Replace whole-milk dairy products with the low-fat and skim counterparts and use spices that help add flavor without the fat.

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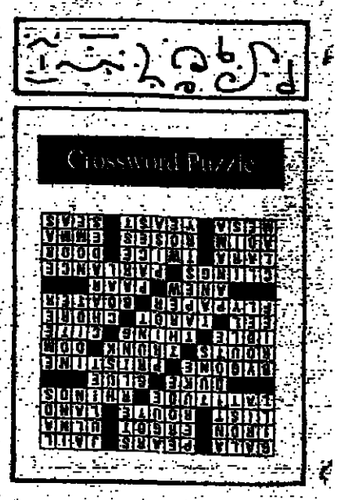

Activities

Royal Cultural Centre	661026/7	Plaza Cinema	699238
American Centre Library	820101	Philadelphia Cinema	634144
British Council	636147/8	**Sports Clubs**	
French Cultural Centre	637009		
Goethe Institute	641993	Al Hussein Sports City	667181
Russian Cultural Centre	641158	Orthodox Club	810491
Spanish Cultural Centre	624049	Royal Automobile Club	815410
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777	Royal Shooting Club	736572
Haya Arts Centre	665195	Royal Chess Club	673713
Hussein Youth City	667181/5	Royal Racing Club	09-801233
Y.W.C.A.	641793	Jordan Bridge Assoc	676990
Y.W.M.A.	664251	Amman Municipality Library	637111
Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	675571	Univ. of Jordan Library	843555
Nabil & Hisham's Theatre	625155	R.S.C.N.	837931/837937
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Awqaf & Islamic Affairs	666141	Planning	644466
Culture / Jabal Amman	636391	Post & Communications	624301
Education & Higher Education	669181	Public Health	665131
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Czechoslovakian	665105
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Greek	671331/2
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Hertz Shakhshir	668958

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Amman	6
Tafileh/Wadi Mousa	7
Queen Alia Int. Airport/Madaba	8
Zarqa/Free zone/Ruseifa	9

Museums

Folklore Museum: Jewelry and costumes over 100 years old, as well as mosaics from Madaba and Jerash (4th to 18th centuries). The Roman Theatre, Amman. Open from 9 am - 5 pm year round. Closed Tuesdays. Tel: 651760.

Jordan Archaeological Museum: Features an excellent collection of the antiquities of Jordan. Jabal Al Qal'a (Citadel Hill). Open from 9 am -5 pm). Closed Tuesdays. Tel: 638795.

Jordan National Gallery: Contains a collection of paintings, ceramics, and sculptures by contemporary Islamic artists from most of the Muslim countries, and a collection of paintings by 19th century Orientalist artists. Muntazah, Jabal Luweibdeh. Open from 10 am - 5 pm. Closed Tuesdays. Tel: 630128.

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Crown	798181
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Marriott	660100
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Buenos Aires	1	Germany	49	Nigeria	234	Taiwan	886
Australia	61	Bonn	288	Lagos	1	Taipei	2
Adelaide	8	Greece	30	Norway	47	Thailand	66
Brisbane	7	Athens/Pirseus	1	Oslo	2	Bangkok	2
Canberra	62	Hungary	36	Oman	968	Tunisia	216
Melbourne	3	Budapest	1	Pakistan	92	Tunis	1
Perth	9	India	91	Karachi	21	Turkey	90
Sydney	2	Banglore	812	Lahore	42	Ankara	4
Austria	43	New Delhi	11	Peshawar	521	Istanbul	1
Vienna	222	Bombay	22	Rawalpindi/Islamabad	51	UAE	971
Bahrain	973	And all cities with area codes beginning with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.		Paraguay	595	Abu Dhabi	2
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The battle of the giants:

Unix vs. Windows NT

ONE OF the hottest debates in the information technology industry is how the Unix operating system will fare under the forthcoming onslaught of Windows NT from Microsoft.

Applications, not operating systems, drive business and PCs are invariably sold with a bundle of Microsoft software, which in the near future may include NT.

The price of computers with Intel 486 processors continues to fall as well as the prices of machines with faster chips such as Digital's Alpha.

So the question is, who will be willing to pay for Unix if NT is verging on a commodity operating system which does everything asked of it and even integrates well with desktop applications?

Some say that users will react against Microsoft's *likely* desktop and possible network server dominance preferring software whose *source code is wholly independent* and available for improvement.

Certainly Unix is tried and tested with 25 years' worth of development, 10,000 commercial applications and a whole software industry supporting it.

Today, Unix is owned by Novell. However, Unix's future lies with the independent standards organization X/Open, which represents an agreement between the major vendors known as the Common Open Software Environment (COSE). About 75 Unix system suppliers and developers have agreed to a specification for a single set of Unix Application Programming

Interfaces.

The emphasis is on open systems and Unix is one user choice for hardware.

Windows NT, less than six *months old, demands as much* processing power as Unix to work effectively. It offers a front end which 20 million Windows 3.1 users are familiar with. Software developers and mainstream computer manufacturers such as Digital are committed to supporting Windows NT.

NT should not be seen as potentially everything for every user. Perhaps it competes with Novell's Netware for the LAN server market, or is it more appropriately targeting the box? The answer is probably a bit of both, but favors the high-end desktop and LAN server, assuming that NT proves itself sufficiently robust.

Modern Unix's ability to support high-performance desktop computers, mid-range departmental servers and even mainframe-like processors while retaining reliability and security is its greatest strength.

Many agree that one of the most exciting things about Unix is its ability to handle even the largest platforms and move towards distributed computing. Its design, notably the ability to handle parallel processing and the object-oriented Unix environment *from NeXT, plus its resilience* and storage-handling give it inherent advantages over NT.

So when we look beyond the PCs and beyond the servers, looking to the hosts, there will be Unix. The threat posed by Microsoft might just make Unix better. ■

The Sunday Times

Lotus 1-2-3 Release 4 for Windows: Multimedia Edition

LOTUS DEVELOPMENT Corporation has recently delivered an innovative multimedia version of their popular spreadsheet package, Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows on CD-ROM.

The new package is Lotus 1-2-3 Release 4 for Windows: Multimedia Edition.

This product combines 1-2-3 Release 4 for Windows with integrated multimedia learning and communications tools. It comes on CD-ROM with a combination of text, sound and animation making this multimedia edition more powerful and easier to learn, dramatically reducing training and support costs while enhancing productivity.

This is achieved by the Multimedia SmartHelp learning tools included in the Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows Multimedia edition. These learning tools are an animated and narrated Guided Tour, *Innovative 'QuickMovie'* animations that interactively educate users about 1-2-3 concepts and *procedures*, an audible proof reader and a complete documentation set in an on-line reader, with *links to Help*.

Additionally, 1-2-3 Release 4 for Windows: Multimedia Edition includes multimedia enabling tools including ScreenCam which is a multimedia learning, presentation and communications tool; and Lotus Sound, Lotus Media Manager and Lotus Annotator.

"One of our primary design goals with 1-2-3 is to give users a powerful spreadsheet that is easy to learn and use," said Jeffery R Beir, vice president of Lotus' Spreadsheet Division. "*The new* multimedia SmartHelp tools and ScreenCam in the multimedia Edition are *valuable additional* enhancements to the usability of 1-2-3 Release 4 an the productivity of users," he added.

The Multimedia Edition will be available in the United States at a *suggested retail price of* $495. Upgrades from all other Lotus 1-2-3 releases and from competitive spreadsheets *will be* at a suggested retail price of $129.

The Multimedia edition will be available in the Middle East region shortly after the first quarter of 1994. The product will be available through Lotus dealers and through other Lotus channels. ■

News update

Amstrad Mega PC

● Amstrad, the British electronics manufacturer, has had a very interesting product on the market for a number of months which puts a 386 PC and a Sega games

console in one box. It also costs less than a normal 386 would be priced at a humble £499 in Britain!

The Amstrad MegaPC is a new idea which blends the two concepts of home computing using disks and games consoles using cartridges in one by providing a PC case with a flap on the left that takes games cartridges and offers all the sound and graphics through your monitor.

The Sega Megadrive itself, is an advanced 16-bit games console capable of some really impressive graphics and sound with a stand alone price of £99.

Still, the machine is not too well configured for a power user who may need a 486 and a bigger hard disk. However, it is coming to be realized that 486 power is wasted on the normal user anyway, and that the inclusion of a Sega Megadrive should make up for the lack of space on the hard disk because you don't need to install 10 disk IBM PC games.

Nasher Al Arabi for Macintosh

● Diwan is currently being challenged in the Arabic desktop publishing (DTP) market which it has lead for many years by a new entrant from the London-based company ACS.

Al Nasher Al Arabi was successful as an Arabic DTP package for the IBM PC, so the company decided to release it for the Macintosh.

The package will offer color separation and a number of features previously unavailable when dealing with Arabic text such as runaround, bending text towards the right or left with the ability to change the size from 1 to 1000 points.

This is will help heat up the Macintosh Arabic DTP market, especially with plans underway to Arabize QuarkXPress, the very famous international Mac DTP package.

Seminar on 'Fundamentals of Color'

● The Graphics and Arts Center, Ideal Systems sales outlet specializing in the publishing and printing field, is holding a seminar on 'Fundamentals of Color' on Saturday, 11 December at the Amman Marriott Hotel.

This seminar is targeted to all those who utilize color in all its various forms.

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INTERFACE
BY ZEID NASSER

New chips on the block

NOT VERY long ago, personal computer buyers didn't have much of a choice of microprocessors in their computers. If you got an IBM PC, you'd get an Intel chip. If you opted for a Macintosh, you'd get a Motorola 68000.

Nowadays, with higher and cheaper processing power coming to the desktop, there's a whole new bunch of microprocessors on the market, in addition to the two standards above and with some built-on compatibility with both Intel and Motorola.

Intel have, of course continued to produce their x86 (386, 486....) series recently releasing the Intel Pentium which is actually the 586. Competitors such as AMD and Cyrix have given Intel a lot of trouble in its market by producing 386 and 486 compatible chips and breaking Intel's monopoly. But Intel has more trouble coming from elsewhere.

In 1991 IBM, Apple and Motorola got together to produce a new chip standard called the PowerPC based around RISC architecture. PowerPC systems from IBM and Apple are now almost on the market and boast similar if not higher performance levels than the Pentium. What's more, they offer a safe upgrade path to existing Macintosh (Motorola 68000) and Intel (IBM PC) users.

Another entrant into the battle is the Alpha processor from Digital. The RISC-based Alpha processor, is more of a business user's choice especially since it's only been featured in workstations and VAX machines. Still, it out-performs the Intel Pentium and will cost less, making it a reasonable choice, especially now that Digital has released the DEC Alpha AXP which is a desktop computer that includes a Alpha and runs Microsoft Windows NT. A new chip on the way from IDT is a MIPS-compatible chip called the Orion which should run Windows NT around 70 percent faster than the Pentium and will be cheaper too.

Looking to the future, it seems that users will have many more choices than they do now. Although this means a wider and more difficult choice, the fact that software designed for one processor should also run on others is a definite consolation. The Alpha AXP and the PowerPC already run software designed for Intel-based PCs. Thanks to Solaris for Intel PCs from Sun, RISC processors can now also run Microsoft Windows software also originally designed for Intel PCs. So that takes care of people already using Intel based PCs who would like to move onto computers with more powerful processors. One the other hand, Macintosh software which traditionally runs on the Motorola 68000 family will also be running on the Apple version of the PowerPC. That should cater for Macintosh users too.

With this fact in mind, many believe that the PowerPC holds the best success formula for the future among RISC-based processors. So what we're looking at is basically a situation where we've got different brains running the same popular software. The wars in the computer industry never seem to end, which is not all that bad if the user is to gain from what's happening.

As a home user, your best choice for the time being is to stick to computer manufacturers who promise a way up to any one of the three main battling standards. If you're in the market for an Intel 486 PC, make sure it' upgradable to Pentium. If you want a Macintosh, make sure it's one of the newer models from Apple such as the Quadra 800, Centris 650 or the Mac IIvx all of which Apple will offer a PowerPC upgrade board for.

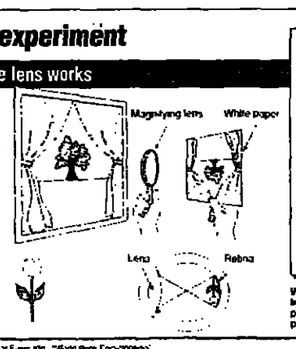
Remember, In a computer world of rapidly changing standards, you don't want to be left behind. ■

Try This: Eye experiment

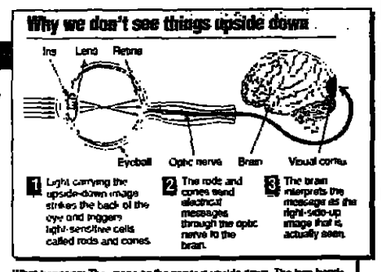
Learn how your eye lens works

You'll need: A magnifying lens, a ruler, a sheet of clean white paper

1. Pull down the shades and draw the curtains on all but one window in a room
2. Hold the lens 5 feet from the open window
3. Place the paper on the side of the lens away from the open window
4. Move the paper closer to and farther from the lens, slowly, until you can clearly see the window and what's outside



Why we don't see things upside down



1. Light carrying the upside-down image strikes the back of the eye and triggers light-sensitive cells called rods and cones.
2. The rods and cones send electrical messages through the optic nerve to the brain.
3. The brain interprets the messages as the right-side-up image that is actually seen.

What happens: The image on the paper is upside down. The lens bends light as it passes through. Your eye lens bends light the same way as it passes through. Light hits the back of your eye the same way it hits the paper — upside down

SOURCE: "Adventures in Science - Prodigy For Events Into" "Grolier Book Encyclopedia"

South African police units unable to keep peace in townships

By Bob Drogin

TOKHOZA, SOUTH AFRICA—The sun was setting, and the long light cast a reddish glow on the corpse. He was black, about 20, and had been shot twice in the face. Then his shoes were stolen. He lay in gray socks, muddy pants and a torn white shirt beside a fly-infested trash heap.

Walking up, police Lt. Schalk Strydom lifted the Chubby Chicken box that someone had placed over the man's face. He grimaced. It was his first day at work here.

"This is the fifth corpse we've found so far today," Strydom said softly. "Three were shot. The other two, a man and a woman, were tied to a tree. It seems they were stoned and hacked to death. It was very bad."

With that, automatic gunfire suddenly crackled nearby. Then came a second burst. Strydom and his six constables in the Internal Security Unit *quickly scrambled back into their tank*-like armored vehicle and roared off to search for the sniper. Shotguns and R-5 assault rifles bristled out the gun ports on the front, sides and rear.

They didn't catch the gunman. They rarely do. Instead, the security police, among the most hated white men in South Africa, attempted to patrol what is probably its most violent black township: down street after street of burned-out and abandoned houses, along sabotaged railroad tracks and felled telephone poles, and over deep trenches and stone barricades built to keep them out.

Members of the police's 35 Internal Security Units see themselves as guardians of law and order in the war-torn townships where more than 12,000 people have been killed since 1990. But many blacks blame the security SWAT teams—made up mostly of young, white Afrikaners—for worsening the bloodshed. The police stand accused of years of brutal murder, torture and terror in the service of apartheid.

The country's most respected black leaders, including Nobel Peace laureates Nelson Mandela and Anglican Archbishop Desmond M Tutu, last week issued their most impassioned plea yet that the security squads be withdrawn immediately from the black townships and replaced by a still-unformed community police force.

The ISUs have employed "a deliberate strategy of destabilization" to undermine those working to bring multiracial democracy to South Africa, the leaders said after a two-day conference on the growing violence. "They have actively carried out acts of aggression against our people."

Mandela, who has called South Africa "the most violent society in the world today," is calling for the withdrawal as part of his campaign to be elected president in the country's first all-race elections. Col. Ray Harrald, the police spokesman, denies allegations of brutality. "The perception is that the Internal Security Units are a bunch of thugs, that we commit atrocities, that we're killing the people, that we're the bad guys," he said. "But that's definitely not so."

Harrald said the 7,500 men in the ISU division had killed about 20 people this year, compared to more than 220 police of various forces killed on duty. Critics say the police have secretly killed far more, however, by supplying arms, transportation or intelligence to warring factions.

So far this year, more than 3,000 people, the vast majority of them black, have been shot, hacked, clubbed or burned to death in political and criminal carnage, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Nelson Mandela: running for president of South Africa

And the worst area by far is the East Rand, a grim sprawl of a million or so people living in tin-roofed shacks, drab concrete boxes, squalid squatter camps and impoverished townships, including Tokhoza, on the rubble-strewn plains southeast of Johannesburg.

More than half the nation's violent deaths last month were in this bloody urban war zone, so many that overflowing local morgues were forced to ship unidentified bodies elsewhere for burial.

Even worse was the savage style of death. Trains and taxis were attacked, cars and homes were burned, and mothers and children were slaughtered in drive-by shootings. An average of one East Rand resident was "necklaced" each day—doused with gasoline, then horribly burned to death with a tire around the neck.

The causes of the violence remain a matter of fierce debate. The fightin appears heaviest between Xhos speaking members of the Africa National Congress and the rival Zul based Inkatha Freedom Party. But it an ethnic war as much as a politic one, fought both with traditional spea and modern AK-47s.

Tokhoza and adjoining Katlehon the two worst areas, are checkered wi ANC and Inkatha zones. Each marked by graffiti and usually protecte with a "no-go zone" of abandoned burned-out homes. Some of the hous were *once middle-class*, with bric driveways and neat gardens. Their own ers now have fled, and the houses *ransacked and empty*.

Strydom's gray Nyala, as the eigh man armored vehicle is known, move *slowly through the no-go zones*, t men tense inside. Rock barricades h been built, boulders and trees block some roads, and *deep trenches had be* dug and filled with water to keep t police out.

The Nyala turned back a few time unable to cross a barrier. At one poi it ground to a halt and the vault-li pneumatic doors hissed open so t men could rush out and grab two pic and a shovel left in a freshly dug ditch.

"If we drive and get caught in t ditch, they come and attack us with p rol bombs," said constable Franco Beukes, 21, cradling a 12-gauge sh *gun and peering nervously into t* gloom. Like the others, he wore camo flage fatigues and a bulletproof ve and carried a 9 *mm pistol*.

The mistrust on both sides is obviou Each time the Nyala doors opened, t commandos jumped out with gu cocked, then ran behind trees and roc and watched for an ambush. At nig the vehicle's roof-mounted floodlig blind passersby and shine in bedroo windows.

And in two nights, not a word w exchanged between the police and t community they say they serve.

"People don't even report the corps anymore," Strydom said.

"If we don't find them, the bodies l lay there for the dogs. Sometimes on the bones are left."

Still, the police have some effec Several dozen people scattered alon Tokhoza ally as the Nyala turned a co ner. Spilled milk, broken eggs and oth spoiled foodstuffs littered the ground. car quickly sped away.

Nearby in a squatter camp known Phola Park, the Nyala pulls over as floodlights can illuminate fresh daubed graffiti on a wall: "No peace Tokhoza." It's not clear whether i meant as a warning or a simple stat ment of fact. ■

LA Times-Washington Po News Servic

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